5-2012

Coveted Lands: Agriculture, Timber, Mining, and Transportation in Cherokee Country Before and After Removal

Vicki Bell Rozema
University of Tennessee - Knoxville, vrozema@utk.edu

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Vicki Bell Rozema entitled "Coveted Lands: Agriculture, Timber, Mining, and Transportation in Cherokee Country Before and After Removal." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

Daniel M. Feller, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Steven V. Ash, Lynn A. Sacco, Gerald F. Schroedl

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Coveted Lands: Agriculture, Timber, Mining, and Transportation in Cherokee Country Before and After Removal

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Vicki Bell Rozema

May 2012

Abstract

Covering a period from approximately 1779 to 1850, this dissertation studies natural resources and land use in Cherokee country before and after forced Cherokee removal from east of the Mississippi. As the market economy in the South grew in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Euro-Americans perceived the Cherokee Nation as an obstacle to commercial transportation and economic expansion. Southern leaders such as John C. Calhoun and Wilson Lumpkin planned to build canals and railroads through the Cherokee Nation. Disputes over saltpeter, gold, salt, and iron mining rights and the ownership of ferries, taverns, and turnpikes caused conflict. The Cherokees resisted all forms of encroachment on their natural resources and continuously modified their laws and methods of dealing with intruders. This dissertation examines the importance of the spread of cotton agriculture across the South, the availability of timber for establishing homesteads and small industry, and the medicinal herbs trade as factors in Cherokee land cessions. It also studies the extent to which a growing national interest in science, a national push for internal improvements, and the policies of the Corps of Engineers influenced Cherokee removal.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Historians have listed many causes of Cherokee land cessions and the removal of 1838. These include ethnocentrism, discovery of gold in the Georgia mountains, states rights issues, the Georgia Compact of 1802, the perceived threat of sovereign governments within the borders of autonomous states, and depletion of eastern soils due to poor agricultural practices. Andrew Jackson's investment in the cotton market in Tennessee and his speculation in cotton land in north Alabama have also been cited in connection with western expansion. Similarly, scholars Theda Perdue and Mary Young have mentioned Wilson Lumpkin's survey of Cherokee lands in 1826 for a railroad route through the mountains as a notable event leading to the Cherokee removal. Such events point to a struggle for control of natural resources like timber, minerals, and transportation routes in the Cherokee country, but these factors have not been thoroughly studied as a cause of Cherokee land cessions. I intend to fill that gap by examining the ways that the expanding commercial economy influenced acquisition of Cherokee lands for mining, agriculture, and other commercial purposes. This work also explores the importance of natural resources such as timber, salt, and iron in developing small subsistence farms and communities in newly acquired Cherokee lands. Finally, this study investigates how the growing national interest in advances in science and engineering in the early nineteenth century influenced southern leaders and the Department of War in their efforts to obtain Cherokee lands. The South embraced new national movements in internal improvements and the application of new technology to mining and transportation. The desire by progress-minded southern whites to

develop scientific-based industry and access interstate and international markets is connected to the removal of the Cherokees.[1]

This study begins about 1779, when white emigrants were traveling through Cherokee country to reach new settlements on the Cumberland Plateau. This is a period when large numbers of Euro-Americans began to pour over the Appalachian Mountains into Indian lands on the western side. In addition to carving out small subsistence farms on the Cherokee-American frontier, these illegal intruders used local resources to establish transportation routes, build small industry, tap into existing Cherokee trade systems, and establish new ones. The study follows the use of natural resources in Cherokee country to 1850, twelve years after the 1838 removal, to see how white immigrants actually used the natural resources that they coveted. Some resources, like saltpeter, declined in importance, while others, like transportation routes, continued to increase. While this study focuses on the first seventy-five years of the United States, some colonial topics, such as kaolin mining, will also be discussed to show how the Cherokees changed strategies over time to deal with white efforts to control their natural resources.

Chapter one analyzes agriculture in the Cherokee Nation before and after removal in 1838. Historians have long argued that the spread of cotton agriculture across the South abetted Cherokee removal. As early as 1920, William E. Dodd's study of the antebellum South, *The Cotton Kingdom*, credits cotton with the influx of slave owners into the region. According to Dodd, "The Cherokees, the Creeks, the Choctaws, and the Chickasaws . . . dwelt upon good

[1] James R. Christianson, "Removal: A Foundation for the Formation of Federal Indian Policy," *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 10 (Fall 1985): 215-25; Mary Young, "The Exercise of Sovereignty in Cherokee Georgia," *Journal of the Early Republic* 10 (Spring 1990): 43-63; Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 59-60.

cotton lands." These "lands were rapidly converted into cotton plantations. Pretty cottages and squalid wigwams, fertile fields and wild hunting-grounds, negro slaves, horses, and farming implements all had to be sacrificed without any other reparation than doles of money and such lands as the Indian could settle beyond the Red River."[2]

More recently, Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green have linked the expanding market economy and transportation revolution after the War of 1812 with Indian removal. "Like a flood of water from an upturned bottle, Americans poured into the western country after the war. Grain and livestock farmers spread north of the Ohio River . . . . South of the Ohio the expansion of cotton plantation agriculture produced the same result." The population of the western territories increased rapidly after the war. The combined populations of Alabama and Mississippi, for example, increased ten-fold from 1810 to 1830. The introduction of steamboats on the Mississippi and other western rivers opened new markets for products from the lands west of the Appalachians and encouraged Americans to grow cotton and other commercial crops. As Perdue and Green explain, "The economic forces that fed this growth generated an unprecedented demand for [indigenous] land, which was nowhere more intense than in the South. The southern tribes, the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Cherokees in particular, held millions of acres of fertile land that planters hoped to turn into cotton fields." Nearly nine decades after Dodd wrote *The Cotton Kingdom*, Perdue, Green, and other historians still argue that the promise of a

[2] William E. Dodd, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Chronicle of the Old South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920), 5-7.

developing cotton economy caused a flood of immigration into the region and the displacement of its original occupants. [3]

The thesis that the spread of cotton agriculture across the American South was a primary cause, if not the sole cause, of the removal of the Cherokees, has also influenced texts on world history. In a discussion of the global cotton industry that stretched from India to Texas, Eric R. Wolf argues in *Europe and the People without Histor*y that the expansion of cotton plantations across the South in the nineteenth century was the primary cause of not only Creek and Choctaw removal, but also the banishment of the Cherokees.[4]

The spread of cotton agriculture across the South is one of the most frequently cited causes of the removal of all of the Southeast Indians, including the Cherokees. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that the slave-based cotton economy of the South is one of the most analyzed topics in antebellum American history. The development of the cotton gin in 1793, historians argue, promoted the spread of cotton agriculture, and resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles from their eastern homelands as soon as a place could be found to put them. With the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the state and federal governments finally had a place to send the Indians, making it feasible to open former Indian lands in the Southeast for cotton production. The thesis that the spread of cotton agriculture was a primary cause of the Cherokee removal of 1838, however, has not been closely examined. The goal of the first chapter is to correct that omission and to show that the thesis is only partly true.

---

[3] Theda Perdue and Michael Green, *The Cherokee Nation and The Trail of Tears* (New York: Viking, 2007), 48-49.
[4] Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, 2d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 69, 278-85.

Cotton agriculture was limited in the Cherokee Nation because of the variability of climate and soil. While it influenced land cessions in Alabama and Middle Tennessee, it was not a significant factor in the final removal.

Chapter Two examines the timber and medicinal herbs industries in Cherokee territory to understand the role they played in the industrial development of the South. As Euro-Americans moved into Cherokee lands, they found many uses for the abundant and diverse timber resources of the region. Large quantities of wood were used to build cabins, fences, barns, gristmills, sawmills, and in other wood-based industries. Wood was also needed for gunpowder production and boat building. New immigrants into Cherokee country quickly embraced the timber industry and found many ways to exploit the vast reserves of forests.[5]

James Elliott Defebaugh's classic *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, written in 1906, explains that the South developed a thriving lumber export business shipping wood and wood products to the Caribbean and England. But the southern lumber industry was confined primarily to the coast and the Mississippi River in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. Southern businessmen were not looking to exploit timber resources in the interior of the South or Cherokee lands for the international market. Until technical advances in

[5] John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees: 1819-1900* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 190, 192; Tench Coxe, *A Statement of the Arts and Manufactures of the United States of America, for the Year 1810* (Philadelphia: printed by A. Cornman, 1814), 41. The 1810 census report tracks manufactures in East and West Tennessee separately. By 1820, statistics were combined to give a state total for the entire states, excluding those lands still owned by Native Americans.

the lumber and railroad industries later in the nineteenth century opened former Cherokee lands to distant timber markets, wood-based industries depended primarily on local markets.[6]

Chapter Two also examines other products of the forest. Before Euro-Americans began to coerce land cessions from the Cherokees, the Indians engaged in trading several products including chestnuts, maple sugar, and medicinal herbs such as ginseng and pinkroot. Although the trade in timber and these other fruits of the forest did not lead directly to any land cessions or the 1838 removal, their potential value to new settlers in establishing homesteads and in supplementing their incomes must have been attractive to people contemplating emigration over the Southern Appalachians into Cherokee Country. In addition to the white man's development of wood-related industries, this chapter examines how the Cherokees controlled the entry of whites into their country to operate sawmills and other types of small industry.

Chapter Three investigates another category of southern resources: minerals. The Southern Appalachians were rich in many types of mineral resources including salt springs, saltpeter caves, iron, gold, quartz, and kaolin. In the eighteenth century, hunters from Virginia and North Carolina crossed over the mountains to follow game to salt licks where they established settlements on the Cumberland River. This led to conflict with the Cherokees and eventually prompted land cessions. Access to saltpeter also caused conflict, even when white entrepreneurs sought permission from the Cherokees to mine saltpeter caves on the Tennessee and Elk rivers. For example, James Reed, who had obtained Cherokee approval to access their land, became embroiled in a plot with the Cherokee leaders from the Creek Path community who

---

[6] James Elliott Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, Vol. 1. 2[d] ed. (Chicago: The American Lumberman, 1906), 474, 529-30.

conspired to sell their lands and emigrate west. Whites also coveted iron, a common commodity in Cherokee territory used by settlers to supply their forges and in commercial trade. English efforts to mine kaolin in the eighteenth century are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Three also examines the discovery of gold in the North Georgia mountains in the late 1820s and its relationship to the Cherokee removal of 1838. White intruders flocked to the new gold region in the Cherokee Nation beginning in 1829. As the federal government considered how to deal with this violation of Cherokee lands, the state of Georgia planned to confiscate the lands and sell them to fund internal improvements. The gold rush provided an impetus for the distribution of lands to white Georgians via a lottery in the 1830s.

Both popular writers and historians often point to the gold rush in the North Georgia mountains and the subsequent occupation of Cherokee lands by "twenty-niners" as a primary cause of the Cherokee removal. Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, for example, draw a direct connection between the dispute over who owned the gold and the implementation of a land lottery. Unlike some other historians, however, who tend to focus on the gold issue, their study presents a broad perspective of land issues that led to Cherokee land cession and removal in that it traces land disputes back to the British government's Proclamation of 1763, which banned white encroachment on Indian lands west of the Appalachians.[7]

In 1993, David Williams published *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-Niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever* which assumes that the gold rush was more important than the spread of cotton agriculture across the South as a cause of Cherokee removal. While this study is an important scholarly look at the events surrounding the gold rush, it reinforces the premise that gold was the

[7] Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Nation.*

most important cause of Cherokee removal. Williams relies on other scholars and does not examine the issue in his book. Similarly, Fletcher Green's 1982 article, "The Southern Gold Rush, 1828-1836," compares developments in north Georgia with other gold rushes in United States history, but does not thoroughly explore the significance of the gold rush in relation to other events contributing to Cherokee removal. This dissertation reexamines the Georgia gold rush and other white interest in mining to place the discovery of gold in perspective with other causes of Cherokee removal.[8]

Chapter Four analyzes the desire by whites to control transportation routes through the Cherokee Nation as a major cause of land cessions and Indian removal. The construction of roads through Cherokee country—including the 1803 Georgia Road, the 1804 Cumberland Road, and the 1813 Unicoi Turnpike—and the Cherokee reactions to these intrusions are examined. Related issues dealing with passports for travel through Cherokee country, clauses guaranteeing safe passage in Cherokee treaties, and disputes over ferries, taverns, and toll gates on transportation routes are reviewed as the study asks questions about the relationships between land cessions and the desire to improve commercial transportation. For example, why did new towns such as Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Rome, Georgia, spring up on transportation routes immediately after Cherokee land cessions? How did problems in transporting commercial crops from Tennessee to Gulf and Atlantic markets influence the desire to control transportation routes through the Cherokee Nation?

[8] Fletcher Green, "The Southern Gold Rush, 1828-1836," *Journal of Southern History* 48 (August 1982): 373-92; David Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-Niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).

The completion of the Federal Road through Creek lands in 1811 is often cited by historians, ranging from nineteenth-century Alabama biographer Albert J. Pickett to modern-day historian Angela Pulley Hudson, as a major cause of the Creek War of 1813-14. They argue that the road split the Creek Nation both geographically and politically into Upper and Lower Creeks and the two factions disagreed on how to deal with the influx of intruders that the new road brought. Although several historians, including Gilbert Govan and James Livingood, have mentioned Wilson Lumpkin's plans for a railroad route through Cherokee country in their discussions of events leading to the Cherokee removal, no historians have thoroughly examined the issue of internal improvements. One example is Ulrich B. Phillips's *History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860,* one of the most influential books on internal improvements in the South. Writing in 1908, Phillips detailed the transportation revolution that occurred in the South that began in the late eighteenth-century with roads and canals and ended with railroads. He does not discuss which projects ran through Indian country or ponder the political implications these projects held for Indian removal.[9]

Chapter five examines how the growing national interest in science and exploration in the early 1800s encouraged southern leaders and the U. S. Department of War to investigate ways to apply new technologies in Cherokee country in an effort to expand commercial opportunities. These new technologies include canal construction, railroad building, and mining innovations. In

[9] Angela Pulley Hudson, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Albert J. Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period,* 1851 (Reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company Publishers, 1975), 510; Gilbert Govan and James Livingood, *The Chattanooga Country, 1540-1976,* 3d ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 85; Ulrich B. Phillips, *History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908).

American Science in the Age of Jackson, George Daniels explains that after the War of 1812, Americans began to embrace European advances in science and technology. Members of the elite classes sent their sons to Europe for education in the sciences and they hired foreign scholars, engineers, and skilled workers for industry. Following the Lewis and Clark expedition which explored the interior of North America and brought back information about its indigenous peoples and natural resources, Americans began to wonder about the resources in the Indian lands of the Southeast. Several historians have studied these topics in relation to expansion into other regions of the country, but they have not been examined in connection with the Southeast. For example, in *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West,* William H. Goetzmann studied the roles of the United States Army, the artist, and a new breed of American scholar in the conquest of lands west of the Missisippi. In *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860,* Francis Paul Prucha examines similar issues in the conquest of the Upper Mississippi River and its extended watershed. This project takes a closer look at how the national interest in science affected the southern states that contained Cherokee lands. For example, in 1821, North Carolina became the first state to sponsor a geologic survey and other southern states like Tennessee soon followed. Their findings included information on mineral resources in Cherokee country. Southern leaders sought to apply new technologies to harvest the natural resources described in the geological reports.[10]

---

[10]George H. Daniels, *American Science in the Age of Jackson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 3, 8-10, 31; William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860* (Lincoln: University or Nebraska Press, 1953).

The policies of the Corps of Engineers in relation to Cherokee removal are also studied. In 1786, Congress assigned the task of Indian removal to the Department of War and in 1802, Congress created the Corps of Engineers within the department to be responsible for internal improvements in the United States and its territories. Southern politicians and federal officials, such as Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, took advantage of this dual responsibility by using the War Department to coordinate plans for both Indian removal and southern market expansion. For example, the War Department often loaned engineers to states or companies that needed their professional expertise. In one instance, Colonel Stephen H. Long took a leave of absence from the Army to work for the state of Georgia as the chief engineer on the Western and Atlantic Railroad, which was projected to run through the Cherokee Nation. Members of the Corps of Engineers were also used to spy on the Cherokees.

The indigenous fauna of the Cherokee country — another key natural resource — does not have a chapter dedicated to it for two reasons. First, the importance of fauna in Cherokee-white relations was already in serious decline by the time period covered by this study. At one time, the Cherokee region boasted a large variety of wildlife including small mammals such as chipmunks, squirrels, otters, and beaver; large game including bison, elk, and bear; and game birds including turkey and quail. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a thriving fur and skin trade developed between the Europeans and Southeast Indians and pelts found their way to the international market. Competition between the imperial powers over control of the fur and other Indian trade networks caused strife between the Southeastern native groups including the Cherokees, Creeks, and Shawnees. By the end of the eighteenth century, thousands of deerskins and other pelts had been traded by the Cherokees for European cloth, blankets, weapons, and

metal tools. By the early nineteenth century, the gray wolf, river otter, eastern elk, and eastern bison had disappeared from the Southeast thanks to hunting and trapping by Native Americans and Europeans. Although Cherokees continued to trade skins during the period of this study, the fur trade had significantly declined by 1800. Also, the civilization program, which encouraged Cherokees to give up hunting in favor of farming, had been implemented by 1800. That program is discussed in the first chapter on agriculture.

Second, the impact of the fur trade on colonial expansion into Cherokee and other Southeastern Indian lands has been extensively studied by other historians. One of the earliest scholarly works on the subject is Verner Crane's classic 1928 *The Southern Frontier: 1670-1732*. In Crane's interpretation, the indigenous peoples of the southern frontier were powerful polities that contested imperial policy, negotiated advantageous trade terms, and altered the process used by colonial powers to expand their control over Indian trade networks and lands. Other recommended sources on the Southeast Indian fur trade include Tom Hatley's *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era*; Kathryn E. Holland Braun's *Deerskins & Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815*; and Allan Gallay's *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717.* Classic sources for information on traditional Cherokee hunting practices include James Mooney's *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, Gary C. Goodwin's *Cherokees in Transition: A Study of Changing Culture and Environment Prior to 1775*, and Charles Hudson's *The Southeast Indians*.[11]

[11] Verner Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1928); Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Kathryn E. Holland Braund,

By focusing on natural resources, this study reveals that the causes of land cessions and removal were more complex than previously understood by historians. Whites coveted the lands not just for gold or to plant cotton, but for a variety of resources including saltpeter mines, existing corn and fruit farms, salt licks, and waterways. Different resources were desired by different people. Non-elites coveted the region's iron and timber resources to establish subsistence farms and small industry while elites wanted to buy gold and saltpeter mines. Southern leaders like John C. Calhoun, Joel R. Poinsett, Wilson Lumpkin, Willie Blount, and George Gilmer espoused Indian removal while advocating internal improvements because they and other white businessmen, politicians, and military men wanted Cherokee lands for their location on strategic waterways and transportation routes. As the market economy in the South grew in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Euro-Americans perceived the Cherokee Nation as an obstacle to commerce and sought ways to control transportation routes through Cherokee country to Gulf and Atlantic markets. My findings show that Cherokee removal was tied directly to a national push for internal improvements, an expanding commercial economy, and a growing interest in science and technology.

Deerskins & Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); Allan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); James Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, 1900 (Reprint, Asheville, N. C.: Historical Images, 1992); Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 3d ed. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984); Gary C. Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition: A Study of Changing Culture and Environment Prior to 1775* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1977).

Methodology

This project examines a wide variety of primary sources in pursuit of its ultimate goal which is to gain a better understanding of why whites expanded westward into Cherokee territory. It also uses an interdisciplinary approach. To understand the physiographic character of the eastern Cherokee lands and the natural resources that both Cherokees and Euro-Americans found appealing, I draw on books and articles by scholars on southern geology and climate. Archaeologists and anthropologists have long recognized the need to identify the environmental characteristics of the place where their subjects live in order to fully understand their culture and struggles. Following their lead, I draw on archaeological, anthropological, and agricultural studies to understand how the Cherokees used the land for agriculture and why Euro-Americans coveted it. Such studies of southern geology and soil, for example, shed light on the issue of the competition between corn and cotton agriculture in the Cherokee region. Maps are used to illustrate the various physiographic provinces which comprise the Cherokee lands and the soils that are conducive to cotton agriculture, and charts illustrate agricultural production. These cross-discipline techniques are primarily used by this dissertation to study agricultural land use.

An analysis of traditional historical resources, such as local, state, and federal records, including census, administrative, and legislative records, combined with newspaper articles, private papers, and other documentation created by white male elites, helps to understand the land controversies from the Euro-American perspective. Additionally, using an ethnohistorical approach, I study letters and records written by Cherokees. These sources are relatively limited, but they are vital for understanding Cherokee agricultural practices and the significance of natural resources as perceived by the Cherokees themselves. Cherokee laws governing land

management, for example, reveal how the Cherokees reacted to threats from the white world. Wherever possible, I examine documents created by women and non-elites, two other groups whose voices are underrepresented in the more traditional historiography, to learn why thousands of white Americans coveted Cherokee lands and encouraged their political leaders to push for removal.

Historical Overview of Cherokee Land Cessions and Events Leading to the 1838 Removal

The Changing Political Landscape

The eighteenth century was a period of great upheaval for the Cherokees as the empires of England, France, and Spain, and then later the United States, sought to control trade in Indian slaves, furs, and other items and as settlers moved further inland, encroaching on Cherokee lands. The Cherokee homelands once embraced an area of approximately 124,000 square miles in what would later become the states of Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky. (See Figure 1.) At the beginning of the eighteenth century, most Cherokee villages were concentrated in four areas: the Middle and Out Towns in southwest North Carolina and the northeast area of Georgia on the Tuckasegee, Oconaluftee, and Little Tennessee rivers; the Lower Towns along the Savannah River in northwestern South Carolina and northeast Georgia; the Valley Towns on the Cheoah, Valley, and upper Hiwassee Rivers in North Carolina; and the Overhill Towns in East Tennessee on the Little Tennessee, Hiwassee, and Tellico rivers. (See Figure 2.) During the Seven Years' War, the English burned many Cherokee towns, which caused entire villages to relocate and rebuild. In

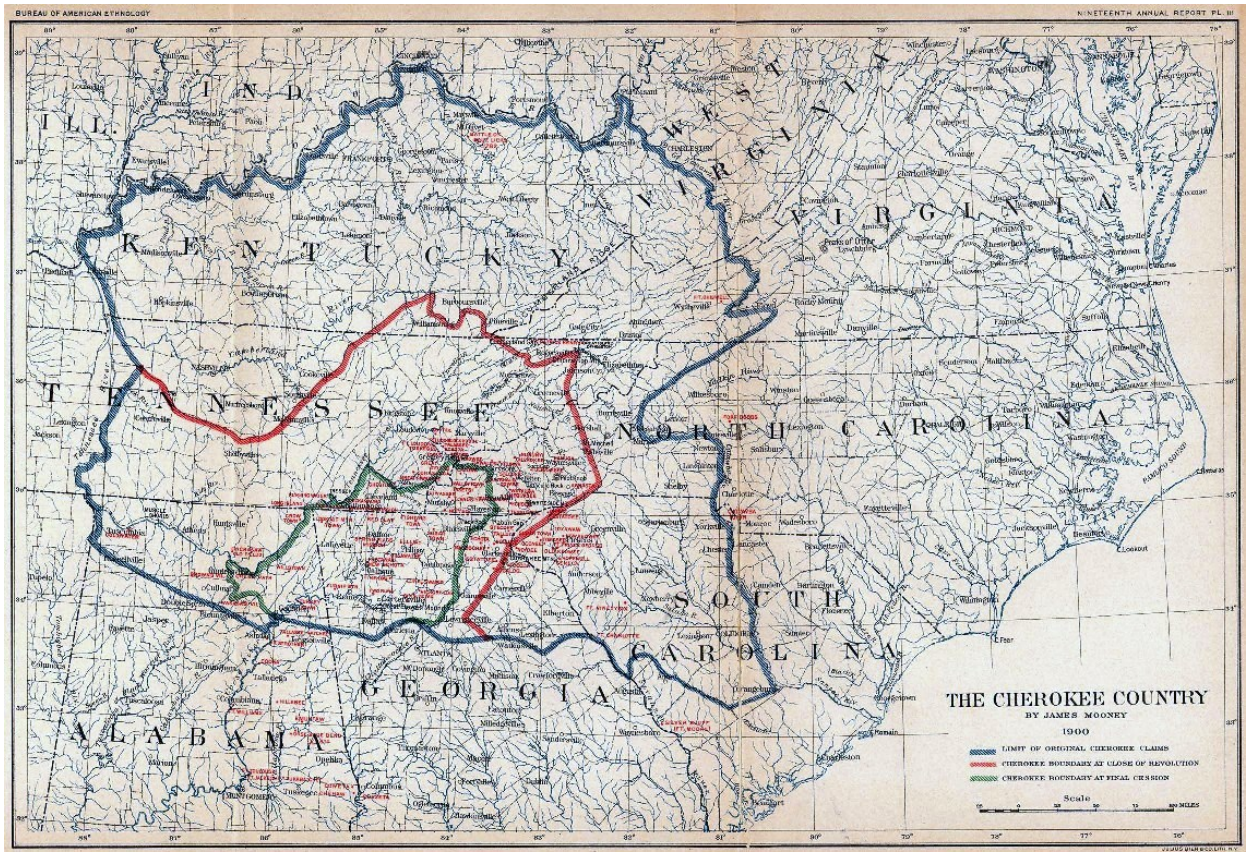

Figure 1. Cherokee Nation Boundaries. The boundaries show the limits of the original Cherokee claims in the early eighteenth century before land cessions commenced (blue), the Cherokee lands at the end of the American Revolution (red), and the National boundaries from 1819 to 1838 (green). (1900 James Mooney "Cherokee Country" map in the Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas. Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.)

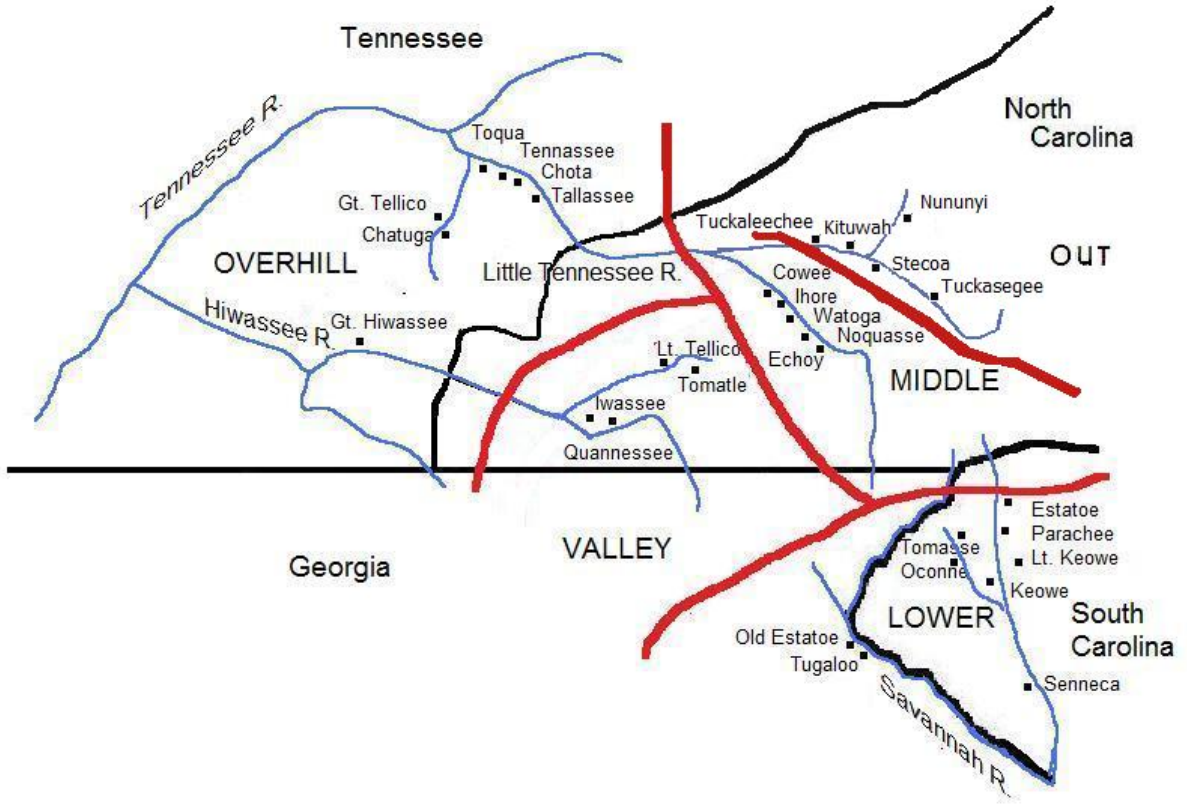

Figure 2. Location of Cherokee Towns in the 18th Century. Based on maps in Betty Anderson Smith, "Distribution of Eighteenth-Century Cherokee Settlements," in *The Cherokee Indian Nation: A Troubled History*, edited by Duane H. King (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 50 and Gerald Schroedl, "Cherokee Ethnohistory and Archaeology from 1540 to 1838," *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 205.

1761, one of the worst years for the Cherokees, the British attacked and destroyed fifteen Middle and Lower Towns. During the American Revolution, the Cherokees sided with the British, and suffered heavily for their decision: in a new round of destruction, American forces attacked Cherokee villages and destroyed hundreds of acres of corn. Because of continued encroachments on their land and a desire to establish peace with the whites, the Cherokees signed nine treaties between 1721 and 1777 that ceded half of their land—thousands of acres in South Carolina, Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky—to the British or Anglo-Americans. Many of these lands, like those in Kentucky, were areas that the Cherokees claimed as hunting grounds and contained no permanent settlements. As a result of the destruction of their villages and food supplies and the massive land cessions, the people of the Middle, Out, Valley, and Lower Towns were pushed into the Overhill villages of East Tennessee and west into Alabama and northwest Georgia.[12]

Of the many treaties signed in the eighteenth century in the hope of establishing peace with the Anglo-Americans, the 1775 Sycamore Shoals treaty and the 1785 Hopewell treaty were two of the most contentious. A number of younger Cherokees, like Dragging Canoe, son of respected leader Attakullakulla, disagreed with the decision by his father and other Cherokee

[12] William L. Anderson, "Introduction," in *Cherokee Removal: Before and After,* Edited by William L. Anderson, vii-xv (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991) vii; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 12-14, 25-26, 39-40; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Nation*, 17-18; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 6-7; Gerald Schroedl, "Cherokee Ethnohistory and Archaeology from 1540 to 1838," in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 204-205, 220-25; Betty Anderson Smith, "Distribution of Eighteenth-Century Cherokee Settlements," in *The Cherokee Indian Nation: A Troubled History*, edited by Duane H. King (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 48-50.

leaders to sign the treaties. Dragging Canoe and his followers broke off from the rest of the Cherokees, moved south to the confluence of Chickamauga Creek and the Tennessee River (present day Chattanooga, Tennessee), and established a new set of villages there. The rebellious Cherokees acquired the name of the creek and came to be known as the Chickamauga Cherokees. The new Chickamauga villages were sometimes referred to as the Lower Towns, because they were located below the Overhill villages on the Tennessee River and because many of the inhabitants of the new settlements had originally come from the old Lower Towns in South Carolina. The Chickamauga Cherokees became embroiled in a war with Anglo-American settlers, particularly with those from East and Middle Tennessee, that lasted into the 1790s.[13]

In the last three decades of the eighteenth century, the Cherokees learned to deal with an array of people who made claims on their territory: multiple imperial governments that included the English, French, and Spanish; local settlers and militias who invaded their homelands in areas like the Watauga and the Cumberland; changing state and territorial governments; and an evolving new United States government. After the Revolution, the leadership of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina shifted from British to American control and the Cherokees tried to establish new relationships with the new state governments and to understand boundaries set by the whites which were constantly changing. For example, North Carolina ceded all of its lands west of the Alleghenies to Congress in 1790, resulting in the formation of the Territory South of the River Ohio. This territory would become the state of Tennessee in 1796. The lands that

[13] Governor Blount to the Secretary of War, "Information received relatively [sic] to the dispositions of the Southern Indians, and the causes of the hostilities of part of the Cherokees and Creeks," 20 March 1792, in *American State Papers: Class II, Indian Affairs* (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832), 1: 263; Secretary of War to the Governor of Georgia, 27 October 1792, in *American State Papers: Class II, Indian Affairs*, 1: 262.

would become the future states of Alabama and Mississippi were originally part of Georgia. In 1802, Georgia surrendered its colonial charter claims to Mississippi and Alabama to Congress and the new public lands became the Mississippi Territory. In return for the lands, Congress promised Georgia that it would take responsibility for sorting out the fraudulent and complicated Yazoo land claims from the 1790s, give the state $1.25 million, and transfer title to all of the Indian lands in the boundaries of Georgia to the state as early as it could be accomplished in a peaceable manner. This compact would later become an important foundation for Georgia's claims to the Cherokee lands within its borders. Alabama, which originally did not have any Cherokee settlements, became a state in 1819. By then, many Cherokees had settled on the Tennessee River and in the Wills Valley area of north Alabama.[14]

The Federal Civilization Program

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, a new federal policy was implemented that would change Cherokee society and its relations with the United States. The Southeast Indians had traditionally dealt with a variety of state and local interests who did not always agree on policy, but in 1787, the United States Constitution placed responsibility for Indian Affairs in the hands of the federal government. In 1791, the newly empowered government negotiated a treaty at White's Fort on the Holston River (present day Knoxville) in which the Cherokees ceded more lands in northeast Tennessee and in western North Carolina. As part of the agreement to cede contested lands, the Cherokees received a promise from the federal government that it would

[14] An Act to Accept the North Carolina Cession, 2 April 1790, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. 4, The Territory South of the River Ohio, 1790-1796* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1936), 13-17.

supply cattle, ploughs, hoes, and other agricultural tools. These goods would help feed the many Cherokees who were starving because their villages and fields had been attacked and burned relentlessly for several decades. The gifts and treaty were an outgrowth of the new civilization program conceived by President George Washington and Secretary of War Henry Knox, who wanted the Cherokees to learn to use the tools and to evolve from a hunting society to an agrarian one. They believed that Native Americans were capable of becoming "civilized" and only needed tools and education to become more culturally advanced. They expected the Cherokees to learn to read and write English and to convert to Christianity. The federal government also planned to set up trading posts, or factories, in the Cherokee Nation where the Indians could exchange pelts for agricultural tools.[15]

By the early 1800s, with the aid of the federal civilization program, many Cherokees had experienced a significant transformation in their traditional lifeways. Many gave up hunting and gathering and began to raise hogs. Men became more involved in agriculture, a practice that had formerly been reserved primarily for women. Cherokees abandoned their towns, spread out into the countryside, and began to live as nuclear families in log cabins. They started to operate taverns, toll roads, and ferries. By about 1794, the rebellious Chickamaugans had begun to succumb to pressure from Euro-Americans and their fellow Cherokees to make peace with the white man. Once the violence ended, the Chickamauga leaders became very adept at negotiating with the federal government for agricultural tools and privileges regarding operations of ferries and turnpikes.

---

[15] "Treaty with the Cherokee, 1791," in Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties.* 7 Vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903-), 2:29-33; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 10.

Several Cherokee leaders wanted to establish schools in the Nation so that their children could learn to read and write English. For this purpose, they looked to Christian missionaries. In 1801, James Vann, a wealthy mixed-blood, donated land to the Moravians to build the first Christian school and mission in the Cherokee Nation. In 1817, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions acquired land on Chickamauga Creek to build another school and mission which they named Brainerd. The success of the Brainerd Mission soon spawned more missions in North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Assimilationist Cherokees like Major Ridge and John Ross supported the missions because they believed that it was crucial for their people to learn to speak and read English, become Christians, and to adapt to white society. As part of the civilization program, the federal government provided some financial aid to support the mission efforts.

Other aspects of Cherokee culture that were affected by the civilization program were the political and legal systems. The traditional systems of the Cherokees were based on clans and towns. Towns were politically autonomous and each had a peace and war chief that led the town based on the recommendations of the town council. Clans, which were defined matrilineally, played important roles in the town council and in the governance of individual and familial behavior. For example, many disputes were settled by family members of the parties involved. Throughout the colonial period, however, the British tried to force a centralized form of government on the Cherokees in order to make negotiations with them easier. The pressure to form a more central government continued into the Early Republic period. By about 1800, the Cherokees had begun to form a more centralized government in response to continued pressure and as an effort to form a unified front against multiple state, local, and federal entities. In 1808,

they passed their first recorded national law, which established a national police force to protect property belonging to widows and orphans and to reduce horse stealing. In 1817, the Cherokees established articles of government that placed sole authority to cede lands in the hands of the National Council. A law passed in 1829 made it a criminal offense punishable by death to sell lands without permission from the Council. Beginning in 1819, the Cherokees began to pass a series of laws regulating the types of white people who would be allowed to enter the nation to operate grist and sawmills, powder works, turnpikes, and other industry. Many of these new national laws were based on long-standing traditional practices or policies that the Cherokees had left to the agents of the United States government to enforce. For example, federal agents like Return J. Meigs consulted with individual Cherokee leaders on the types of white men who would be allowed to enter their nation, but these new laws established national standards that limited access and reduced the possibility of corruption and conflict among the tribe about who could enter and establish residences or businesses. In 1827, the Cherokees established a constitution patterned after that of the United States. The new government included a principal chief, a bicameral legislature composed of the National Committee and the National Council, and a judicial system.[16]

By the War of 1812, many Cherokees, especially mixed-bloods, had begun to embrace the civilization program, had become friends with the whites, and were eager to show what good neighbors they were. When hostilities between the Creeks and Americans broke out in 1813, the

[16] Vicki Rozema, ed., *Voices from the Trail of Tears* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, Publisher, 2003), 43; Constitution of the Cherokee Nation, in Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation adopted by the Council at Various Periods* (Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation: *Cherokee Advocate* Office, 1852), 118-30; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal,* 13.

Cherokees sided with the Americans against the "Red Sticks" Creeks and raised forces to fight alongside the Tennessee militia, commanded by General Andrew Jackson, in bloody battles in Alabama. The Cherokees hoped that in return for showing their loyalty to the American government and actively engaging in the civilization program, white Americans would begin to accept their presence as a sovereign nation located within the boundaries of southern states. But after the War of 1812 concluded in 1815, as Cherokee nationalism was increasing, the South was undergoing a number of changes. The U. S. was in the midst of a transportation revolution which reached into the heart of the South. As the Spanish, English, and French gave up their claims to the gulf borderlands, southern farmers and entrepreneurs were agitating for access to the gulf markets. Middle and East Tennesseans, in particular, examined routes through the Cherokee and Creek lands that provided shortcuts from the Tennessee and Cumberland watersheds to ports at Mobile, New Orleans, Charleston, and Savannah. Another national movement, embraced more by educated male elites than by the typical frontier settler, was the rising interest in science and technology. Southern leaders looked towards new steam, mining, and transportation technologies to solve logistical and industrial problems that hampered commercial expansion. As the European governments transferred lands to American territorial governments, eager southerners became enveloped in another national trend: that of an expanding market economy. The South had experienced a thriving market economy for many years, but competition from foreign regions was now reduced and new international markets had opened to southerners, if only the farmers in the interior could get their goods through Indian lands to port markets.

Other key phenomena that were occurring in the South include a population explosion after the War of 1812 and the spread of cotton agriculture. The combined population in

Mississippi and Alabama, for example, grew from 40,000 in 1810 to 445,000 by 1830. Similarly, the combined populations of Ohio, Georgia, and Tennessee, all of which contained Indian lands, increased from 745,000 in 1810 to more than two million in 1830. One contributing cause to the increased population in the South was the spread of cotton agriculture. The number of cotton farmers in the South had increased slowly but steadily since the invention of the cotton gin in 1793. As stated earlier, the spread of cotton agriculture will be examined more closely in the first chapter.[17]

The 1819 Treaty and the Nation's Final Boundaries

In June 1817, a commission consisting of General Andrew Jackson, Governor Joseph McMinn of Tennessee, and General David Meriwether of Georgia met with a delegation of Cherokees at Calhoun, Tennessee, in an effort to secure major land cessions in the watershed of the Tennessee River in Alabama and Tennessee. Using bribes, the commission convinced a number of Cherokee leaders, including several who had already moved west, to sign a treaty which ceded more land and in which the federal government agreed to pay expenses for all Cherokees who wished to emigrate. With help from the 1817 treaty, Governor McMinn persuaded between 3,500 and 5,000 Cherokees, including Sequoyah, the author of the Cherokee syllabary, to move west. An 1819 treaty ceded more lands in Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Alabama. The 1819 treaty left the Cherokee Nation with only 17,000 square miles of its original 124,000 square miles and defined the final boundaries of the Cherokee Nation in

[17] Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 15.

the East. (See Figure 1 at the beginning of this historical overview.) This was the last land cession before the removal treaty signed in 1835.[18]

Georgia Sovereignty and the Land Lottery

In 1828, the Georgia legislature began to pass a series of laws designed to challenge the Cherokees' claim to sovereignty that they declared in their constitution of July 1827. Recalling the Compact of 1802, Georgia was impatient with the federal government's inability to persuade the Cherokees to sell the remainder of their lands. It had been nine years since the last land cession and the Cherokees had declared that no more lands would be sold; they were firmly entrenched. The laws were a declaration by Georgia that the state had sole jurisdiction over the Cherokee lands within her boundaries. They were also designed to humiliate the Cherokees into realizing that they were second-class citizens and to pressure them to move west where they could live as they wanted and establish their own government. The law of December 20, 1828, for example, that was signed by Governor John Forsyth divided the Cherokee lands and added them to the five northern counties of Carroll, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Habersham, and Hall and extended Georgia laws over all former Cherokee lands. All white people who resided in Cherokee country became subject to the laws of the state of Georgia, not Cherokee laws, and Cherokees came under Georgia's legal jurisdiction beginning June 1, 1830. The 1830 date was

[18] "Treaty with the Cherokee, 1817," in Kappler, *Indian Affairs,* 2:140-44; "Treaty with the Cherokee, 1819," in Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:177-80; William L. Anderson, "Introduction," in *Cherokee Removal: Before and After*, viii.

set, in part, to allow the Cherokees time to emigrate. Those who did not move west by June 1 would be, by default, accepting Georgia citizenship.[19]

Also in 1828, the Georgia legislature authorized a lottery to distribute Cherokee lands to whites, though it did not authorize a survey to facilitate the lottery until 1831. The survey commenced in April 1832 and divided the land into 40- and 160-acre parcels. The lottery took place that same year, but winners were not allowed to legally claim their new property until later. The lottery laws provided some protection for Cherokees by stating that their property was to be secured against encroachment until they voluntarily abandoned it or until the state should "enact to the contrary." In practice, however, it proved difficult for Cherokees to defend themselves against eviction by lucky winners who immediately swarmed into the Cherokee lands to take possession of their new farms. Georgia hoped that these draconian laws would force the Cherokees to sign a removal treaty. Most Georgians did not care that the Cherokees had become more civilized by establishing Christian schools and missions, mills, ferries, turnpikes, and a few cotton plantations within the state's borders. Georgians believed that all of the lands within the state's boundaries should be open to settlement by whites, who they believed could make better use of the land by opening up more acres to agriculture and other industry. [20]

---

[19] William C. Dawson, *Compilation of the Laws of Georgia*, 197-98.

[20] "An Act to authorize the survey and disposition of lands . . .," 21 Dec 1830, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia Passed at Milledgeville at an Annual Session in October, November, and December 1830* (Milledgeville, Georgia: Camak and Ragland, Printers, 1831), 127-43; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Nation,* 84; Richard Pillsbury, "The Europeanization of the Cherokee Settlement Landscape Prior to Removal: A Georgia Case Study," in *Geoscience and Man: Historical Archaeology of the Eastern United States: Papers from the R. J. Russell Symposium* 23 (1983), edited by Robert W. Neuman, 61; James C. Bonner, *A History of Georgia Agriculture: 1732-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 44; Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 83.

State law also declared that no Indian could be a witness in any lawsuit involving a white man unless the white man resided in the Cherokee country. The phrasing of this law permitted Cherokees to testify against white men who worked for them or who squatted on Cherokee lands before Cherokees had a chance to sell their lands and emigrate. In a law passed December 22, 1830, the state forbade all tribal meetings and abolished all tribal organizations. All Cherokee laws were null and void and only the laws of the state were valid. The same law brought white men living in Cherokee country firmly under the control of the state by declaring that they must take an oath of allegiance to the state constitution and have a permit to reside there. This last measure was passed to test the loyalties of many whites who were sympathetic to the Cherokees, such as the missionaries living within the Nation's boundaries.[21]

Georgia's actions to extend its sovereignty over the Cherokees in the late 1820s placed increased pressure on the federal government to solve the Cherokee problem. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act which provided funds to buy Indian lands and to pay for removal to west of the Mississippi. The act was crafted by President Andrew Jackson and Representative John Bell, both of Tennessee. Jackson, like many southerners, argued that it was in the best interest of the Cherokees to move west of the Arkansas Territory so that they could preserve their way of life. After the passage of the Removal Act, both Georgia and the federal government increased pressure on the Cherokees to negotiate a removal treaty.

At the time of passage of the act, all of the Cherokee national leaders steadfastly opposed removal. Between 1832 and 1835, however, a major rift developed between the Treaty Party, as

---

[21] William C. Dawson, *Compilation of the Laws of Georgia*, 198-99; "An act to prevent the exercise of assumed and arbitrary power . . .," 22 December 1830, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1830*, 114-17.

the faction led by Major Ridge and his son John is called, and the National Party, as the faction led by John Ross is known. The Ridges and their followers became convinced that Georgia and the federal government would never give up pressuring the Cherokees to remove and that it would ultimately be in the best interest of their people to move west where they could govern themselves and preserve some of their culture. The National Party continued to refuse to entertain removal or to treat with federal representatives. In late December 1835, three to four hundred of the Ridges' followers met at New Echota, the capital of the Cherokee Nation, for a treaty meeting with agents of the federal government. Most of the negotiations were performed by twenty former leaders of the Cherokees, who no longer held official positions with the national government. On December 29, a small group of Cherokees signed a removal agreement that promised the Cherokees lands west of the Mississippi in return for their remaining lands in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and North Carolina. The Cherokees were given two years from the date of ratification of the treaty by Congress to remove of their own accord, but with financial assistance from the federal government. The United States Senate approved the treaty by a margin of only one vote. It was officially ratified on May 23, 1836, so the deadline for removal was set for May 23, 1838.[22]

The Cherokees continued to resist removal by appealing to sympathetic parties in the federal government and religious leaders. In the end, all efforts failed and a tragic and deadly forced roundup began on the 1838 deadline date. By the time of the roundup, many Cherokees had been refugees from Georgia for many months and were destitute and in poor health; the elderly and children were particularly vulnerable to diseases that rampaged through the removal

[22] "Treaty with the Cherokee, 1835," in Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:439-47; Rozema, *Voices from the Trail of Tears*, 16.

camps and detachments. Although many Cherokees died at the hands of state militia and federal forces, starvation and disease caused the largest loss of life. Somewhere between two and four thousand Cherokees died during the roundup, while waiting for emigration, or on the westward trek later known as the Trail of Tears.[23]

The purpose of this overview has been to help put events described in the following pages in perspective. Because the following chapters are organized topically and not chronologically, the overview will help the reader better understand the political landscape and order of events leading up to those described in the chapters. Many of the events mentioned here that led to land cessions and removal will be described in more detail in the coming chapters.

[23] Rozema, *Voices from the Trail of Tears,* 19, 29-30, 189-193.

Chapter I

Corn versus Cotton: Agriculture in Cherokee Country Before and After Removal

Introduction

In December 1761, during the Seven Years' War, a young British lieutenant from Virginia travelled to what is now East Tennessee on a mission to the Overhill Cherokees. Henry Timberlake kept a journal of his adventure, which he published in London in 1765 with the hope of generating income to erase some bad debts. In his memoir, he described the daily life of the Cherokees with such detail and accuracy that historians and anthropologists extensively mine his observations to learn about eighteenth-century Cherokee industry, religion, politics, and social practices. Regarding Cherokee agricultural practices he wrote:

> The country being situated between thirty-two and thirty-four degrees north latitude, and eighty-seven degrees thirty minutes west longitude from London, as near as can be calculated, is temperate, inclining to heat during the summer-season, and so remarkably fertile that the women alone do all the laborious tasks of agriculture, the soil requiring only a little stirring with a hoe, to produce whatever is required of it; yielding vast quantities of pease [sic], beans, potatoes, cabbages, Indian corn, pumpions [pumpkins], melons, and tobacco, not to mention a number of other vegetables imported from Europe, not so generally known amongst them, which flourish as much, or more here, than in their native climate; and, by the daily experience of the goodness of the soil, we may

conclude, that with due care, all European plants might succeed in the same manner.[24]

The young lieutenant recognized that there was some correlation between latitude and climate and that his fellow countrymen would be interested in the types of crops that could be grown in the Cherokee region, a temperate climate similar to their own. At the time of his visit, most of the Cherokee villages were clustered at the feet of the Southern Appalachians in what is now Western North Carolina, East Tennessee, northeast Georgia, and northwest South Carolina and shared similar types of soil and climates. Attacks by the British and Americans had not yet begun to push the Cherokees southwest into the Tennessee River Valley in large numbers where they would begin to encounter more variations in soil and climate. And at the time of Timberlake's visit, the Cherokees did not grow cotton, nor had cotton agriculture begun its fateful sweep across the South that would mold a slave-based economy.

The goal of this chapter is to examine the agricultural practices in Cherokee country of both the indigenous peoples and the whites that moved into the area. This section will also study the relationship between the spread of cotton agriculture across the South and Cherokee land cessions and the removal of 1838-39. To gain an understanding of factors that affected agriculture in the region, an examination of the soil and climate of the Cherokee lands is made. The spread of cotton agriculture across the South, especially in lands claimed by the Cherokees, was not uniform. This is because the climate, soils, and elevation varied greatly across the

[24] Henry Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-65,* edited by Duane King (Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian Press, distributed by the University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 22.

region. These differences influenced the choice of crops planted by the Cherokees and those who followed. The ancient and sacred practice of corn agriculture was not easily replaced by cotton or any other product.

The Climate and Physiography of the Eastern Cherokee Country

The lands where the Cherokees lived before the 1838 removal lie in several different physiographic provinces which are defined by their geologic contours. (See Figure 3.) The province with the highest elevations is the Blue Ridge Province. This province stretches on a diagonal from southern Pennsylvania to the mountains of northeast Georgia and the Coosawattee River. The province straddles the Tennessee and North Carolina state lines and incorporates the Great Smoky Mountains, Black Mountains, and other ranges. Over 100 peaks measure in the 5,000 to 6,000 foot range with Mt. Mitchell, the highest peak east of the Mississippi, reaching a lofty 6,684 feet. Many of the river valleys, such as the Little Tennessee and the Hiwassee, where Cherokee villages and farms were located, lie between 1,000 and 3,000 feet.[25]

The Cherokee Valley Towns were located in the mountainous Blue Ridge Province in the southwestern tip of North Carolina near present-day Murphy. Major towns in the area included Nottely, on the river of the same name, and Tomotley, on the Valley River. The Middle and Out Town settlements were also located in the Blue Ridge Province and lay southwest of the Great Smoky Mountains. The Middle and Out Towns included Nikwasi, Cowee, Coweta, Tuckasegee,

[25] Nevin M. Fenneman, *Physiography of Eastern United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938), 171-94; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 7-8.

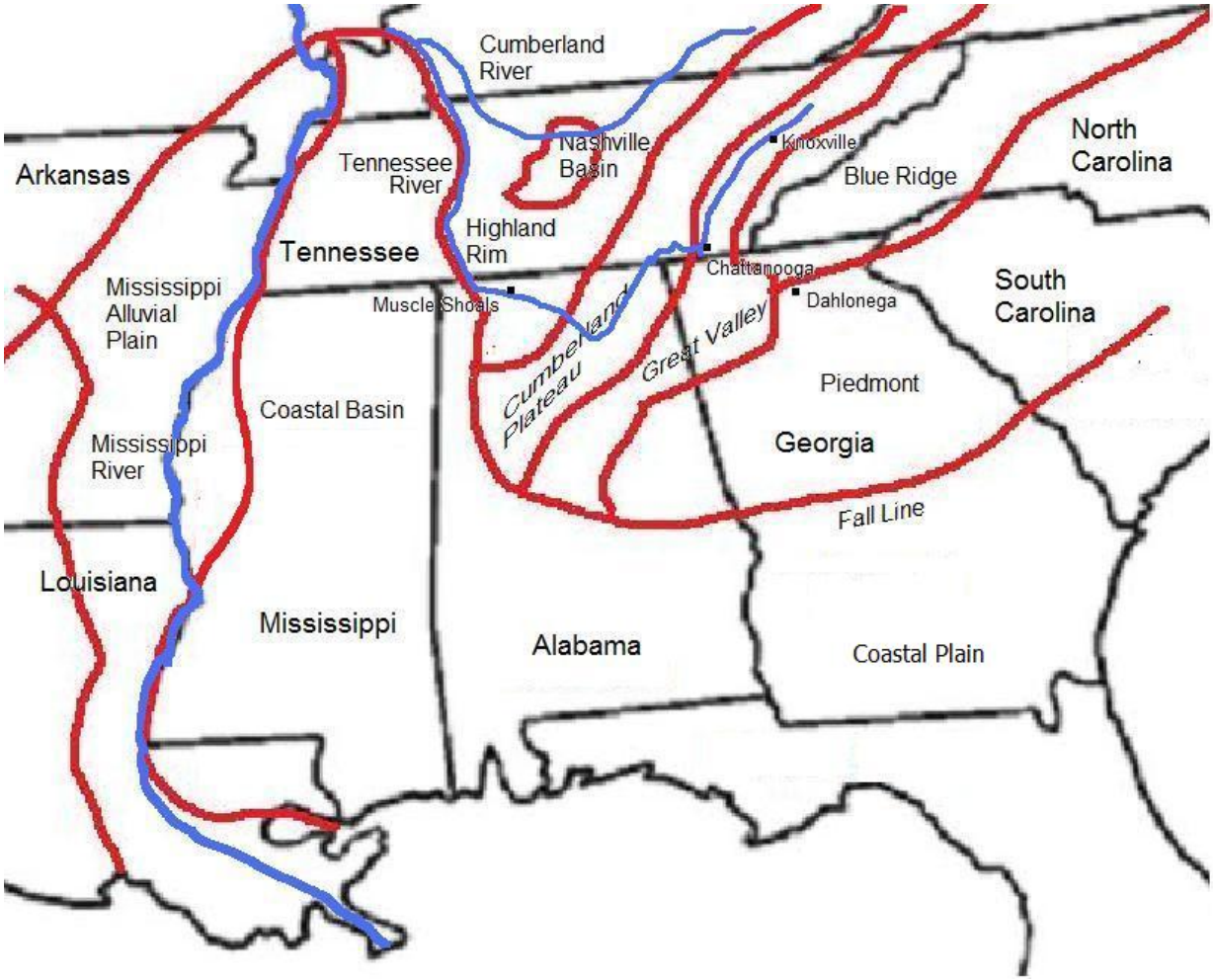

Figure 3. Physiographic Provinces of the Southeast Including Cherokee Country. Based on Nevin M. Fenneman, *Physiography of Eastern United States*, Plate III.

and the Cherokee mother town, Kituwah. The Qualla Boundary, home of the present Eastern Band of the Cherokees, is located in the Blue Ridge Province.[26]

The weather in this area is extremely variable. The mean annual temperature on Mount Mitchell is 43.3° F while at Asheville, which is more than 4,000 feet lower in elevation, the mean annual temperature is 56.5° F. Snowfall in the higher elevations often exceeds 30 inches in the winter while in the warmer southern valleys it averages 8 inches. Frost-free days in the valleys average from 170 to 180 each year. The heaviest annual rainfall east of the Mississippi occurs in the mountains. Asheville has averaged 38 inches per year over a 25-year period while Rockhouse, in Macon County near the Georgia-South Carolina line, averaged 82.96 inches for the same period. Torrential rainstorms also occur occasionally in the summer and early fall.[27]

The Great Valley or Ridge and Valley province lies just west of the Blue Ridge province and stretches 1200 miles in a southwest direction from Scranton and Allentown, Pennsylvania through the Holston and Tennessee River Valleys of East Tennessee, across northwest Georgia,

---

[26] Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 39-40; Schroedl, "Cherokee Ethnohistory and Archaeology," 204-205.

[27] Bennie C. Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology: A Study of the Appalachian Summit*, 1976 (Reprint, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 6. This dissertation uses climate information for the Blue Ridge and other provinces that is based on twentieth-century data. Recent climate research shows that by 1838, the date of the Cherokee removal, the world was experiencing the end of a long cold spell, referred to as the Little Ice Age, which lasted from approximately 1300 C. E. to 1850 C. E. World temperatures averaged 0.5° C to 1.5°C cooler during this period than in the early twentieth century. (Jean M. Grove, *Little Ice Ages: Ancient and Modern*, London and New York: Routledge, 2d ed, 2004, 1: 400-01.) This suggests the possibility that average temperatures were slightly colder and growing seasons were slightly shorter in the first half of the nineteenth century in Cherokee country than in the twentieth. Archaeologists Brett Riggs of the University of North Carolina and Scott Meeks of the University of Tennessee are studying historical records and tree ring data to understand how Cherokee lands may have been affected by the Little Ice Age and climatic events resulting from volcanic eruptions in the early nineteenth century. Their research is still underway and has not been published.

and into north central Alabama. Cherokee lands around Hightower (later Rome, Georgia), including the property of Cherokee leaders Major Ridge and John Ross, lay in the Ridge and Valley Province. The province also includes the Coosa Valley which ranges from 500 feet high at the edge of the Coastal Plain to 700 feet high near the Georgia state line. In Alabama, the valley was the home to a number of Cherokee farms and the Cherokee settlement of Turkeytown. The East Tennessee section of the province reaches a maximum width of 40 miles and served as home to the Overhill towns. Large settlements developed along the Little Tennessee River at Tanasi, Tuskegee, Settico, and Talasi while the Tellico River was home to Great Tellico and Chatuga. Summer temperatures in the Tennessee River Valley, which was home to several Chickamauga farms and Ross's Landing (present-day Chattanooga), average a high of 75° F, which is 5 to 10° higher than the average in the mountains of the Blue Ridge Province.[28]

The Appalachian Plateau is one of the most varied provinces and is divided into multiple sections. The Cumberland Plateau section begins in southern Kentucky and runs south to the Coastal Plain. The plateau reaches a maximum elevation of nearly 3,000 feet in southern Tennessee. South of the Tennessee River in north Alabama it descends to 400 feet. Part of the Black Warrior River Valley, home to the Creek Indians, and Wills Valley, which served as home to Cherokees in the Fort Payne area after the American Revolution, lay in the Alabama portion. The Cumberland Plateau is comprised primarily of layers of sandstone.[29]

Barely reaching 1,300 feet at its highest point, the Interior Low Plateau Province includes the Highland Rim and Nashville Basin in central Tennessee. The Highland Rim, which has

[28] Fenneman, *Physiography*, 195-278; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 12-14, 25-26, 39; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 21.
[29] Fenneman, *Physiography*, 279-342; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 14.

average elevations of 900 to 1,000 feet, dips south into northern Alabama where it includes portions of the Tennessee River including the rapids at Muscle Shoals. Several Chickamauga Cherokees established homes in the area in the late eighteenth century including Doublehead, whose farm was located near the Muscle Shoals. The Nashville Basin, at 900 to 1,000 feet, was part of the land claimed by the Cherokees for hunting and includes parts of the Cumberland, Stone, and Duck Rivers. The growing season in the Nashville Basin is almost 200 days.[30]

The Piedmont Province stretches southwest from the Chester Valley of Pennsylvania across Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and into eastern Alabama. On the south and east, the Piedmont is bounded by the fall line, where a significant drop in the escarpment created falls and rapids where rivers fall to the Coastal Plain province. The average rainfall in most places in the Southeast is 48 to 64 inches per year. The Piedmont, however, receives an average of only 40 to 48 inches per year. The average growing season along the fall line is 240 days, compared to 270 days along the south Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Further north in the Piedmont, the growing season is only 210 days per year. At the northern edge of the Southeast region, the growing season is less than 180 days per year. The Lower Towns of the Cherokees were located in the Piedmont region on tributaries of the Savannah River including the Tugaloo, Keowee, and Chattooga Rivers. Prominent Lower Towns included Keowee, Tugaloo, Ustana'li, and Estatoee.

[30] Fenneman, *Physiography*, 411-448; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 15-16; William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic*, 2d ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 67; Samuel D. Smith, ed., *An Archaeological and Historical Assessment of the First Hermitage* (Nashville: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Department of Conservation and the Ladies Hermitage Association, 1976), 3.

The gold region of Cherokee north Georgia was found on the northern edge of the Piedmont in the Dahlonega Plateau, the highest area in Piedmont Georgia at 1,400 to 1,600 feet.[31]

As we have seen, the physiographic provinces that served as home to the Cherokees varied greatly in elevation and temperature. They also varied in soils, minerals, weather patterns, length of growing season, and vegetation. Forests varied from predominantly oak-pine on the Piedmont Plateau to chestnut-oak in the Blue Ridge physiographic province. The mineral and flora materials available for tools, medicine, and food varied from one region to the next and were subject to exchange. The eastern divide, which runs along the tops of the highest mountains of the Blue Ridge Province, forced the rivers of the Cherokees to flow in opposite directions, with tributaries of the Savannah emptying into the Atlantic Ocean while the Tennessee and its tributaries flowed toward the Mississippi and eventually emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. The division of rivers into east and west flowing bodies complicated transportation, trade, political boundaries, and communication for both the Cherokees and the white settlers who followed. The variations in climate and soil dictated which plants could grow successfully in the various parts of the region. One crop, corn, was found by the Cherokees to be widely suitable for cultivation across physiographic boundaries. Corn was an ancient and sacred crop with a long history in the region.[32]

[31] Fenneman, *Physiography*, 121-162; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 10-12, 40; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians,* 20-21.
[32] Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 16-30.

Cherokee Traditional Agriculture and Sacred Corn

During the Mississippian period in the Southeast, which lasted from approximately 1000 A.D. to 1600 A.D., Native Americans began to rely on maize agriculture to supplement their diet of nuts, berries, fish, game, and domesticated weedy plants including sunflower, chenopod, and sumpweed. Because most of the Southeast receives at least 40 inches of rain per year, corn was widely grown throughout the Southeast by Native Americans. Corn, beans, and cucurbits such as squash and pumpkins were the most important crops that the Cherokees cultivated. The Cherokees grew several varieties of corn including hominy corn, a smooth, hard-kernel corn which was processed with lye to create a nutritious food staple, six weeks corn, an early-ripening corn which was often roasted, and flour corn, a white kernel corn that was processed into corn meal and made into bread and cakes. Beans were often planted at the base of corn and allowed to climb the stalk. Corn plants require a large amount of water, but they also require good drainage. To help preserve moisture, as well as reduce competition from weeds, squash or pumpkins were frequently planted with the corn and beans and served as a ground cover. Corn and beans complement each other because corn depletes the soil of nitrogen while beans replenish the valuable nutrient. This combination of three plants is called the three sisters. On a trip through the Valley River area in southwest North Carolina in 1837, United States Geologist George W. Featherstonhaugh saw this practice of interplanting first hand. He described the individual plots for each household: "each of them having its patch of Indian corn with indigenous beans climbing to the top of each plant, and squashes and pumpkins growing on the ground." Cherokees also grew several other crops including gourds, potatoes, and tobacco.[33]

[33] George W. A. Featherstonhaugh, *Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor*, Vol. 2., 1847 (Reprint, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1970), 284; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 51, 53; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians,* 293-94, 297-98.

Corn played an important role in the Cherokee belief system and in defining gender roles. *Selu* was the Cherokee name for corn and the name of the first woman in the Cherokee belief system. As daughters of Selu, the corn mother, Cherokee women took primary responsibility for agriculture and matters involving kinship. Men, on the other hand, who took primary responsibility for hunting, fishing, war, and trade, emulated Kana'ti, Selu's husband. Men engaged in strenuous activities related to farming such as clearing fields. As Perdue explains:

> Cherokees associated women with the earth and its bounty. When the Cherokee council referred to "Mother Earth" in 1801, they gendered their homeland. Such reference was not common, but the crops that took root in the earth had a clear cosmological association with women through Selu, whose blood soaked the ground and germinated corn. Men had no such mythical connection to the land: when Kana'ti discovered his wife's death, he became a wanderer who never returned to his homeland. Like Kana'ti, men went abroad in search of game while women stayed home, hoed their corn, and became Selu's heirs.[34]

As both an important source of food and a significant part of the Cherokee belief system, the planting and harvesting of corn inspired several annual festivals. One of the most important of these, the Green Corn Ceremony, was celebrated in the fall, usually in middle or late September, and

[34] Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas*, 242-49; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 125; Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 136.

lasted for four days. It was preceded by forty to fifty days by a preliminary Green Corn feast. The preliminary and Green Corn Festivals provided the opportunity for the Cherokees to give thanks, insure a bountiful harvest, strengthen social and community ties, and forgive transgressions by one's neighbors. The festivals were also ceremonies of moral and physical purification and included fasting and ritual purification through the acts of "going to water" and vomiting following the partaking of a medicinal drink. The Green Corn Festival is still practiced by many Cherokees today.[35]

According to Cherokee tradition, land was held in common. Individuals did not own land. Cherokees were free to cultivate as much land as they wished as long as they did not interfere with the rights of others. The communal lands were divided by households and separated by a strip of untilled earth. Traditional tools used in corn agriculture included hoes and digging sticks crafted from stone, wood, animal bone, and shell. European contact, however, introduced new technology and changed agricultural practices. Metal hoes replaced digging sticks made of deer antler. Cherokees readily adopted new fruits and plants including peaches, watermelons, and apples. The introduction of horses, guns, and metal-bladed knives encouraged a thriving trade in deerskins and furs which depleted the faunal population. By the late eighteenth century, Cherokee hunting and farming had changed and the Cherokees were beginning to establish individual farms and more dispersed settlements.[36]

---

[35] Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 51-52; William Harlen Gilbert, Jr., *The Eastern Cherokees* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1943, Reprinted from *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 133: 169-413), 327-330.

[36] Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Nation*, 34-35; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition*, 125-29; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians,* 295.

The Federal Civilization Program

After the American Revolution, the pressure on Cherokees to adopt more modern methods of agriculture grew significantly. White Americans believed that Cherokee men were lazy because they left the primary responsibility for farming to the women. They also believed that available lands were not being properly utilized by the Cherokees. The Cherokees' simple tools prevented exploitation of the land to the degree that Euro-Americans were capable of. The lack of plows prevented deep furrowing and tilling of large acreage. The high cost of harrows, scythes, plows, and draft horses made the tilling of the mountainous and rocky slopes of the back country difficult. The Cherokees were also reluctant to further disturb centuries-old sacred customs regarding the land and the gendered social order that centered on corn agriculture. The end of the American Revolution, however, found most Cherokees suffering from great hardships. Most of their towns were burned, their once-bountiful fields destroyed, and many Cherokees began to look to the federal government for help.[37]

As part of the plan formed by President George Washington and General Henry Knox to reduce tensions between the Cherokees and whites who had settled illegally on their lands, the government formulated a policy to distribute farm implements with the hope that the Indians would embrace Euro-American agricultural practices. In 1791, at White's Fort on the Holston River (present-day Knoxville, Tennessee), the United States and the Cherokees negotiated a treaty that clearly defined boundaries between the Cherokee lands and the United States, gave Cherokees the right to punish transgressions against them under their own laws, and provided resources for a "civilization" program. A clause in the Treaty of Holston promised the Cherokees that the Federal

[37] Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition,* 137-39.

government would provide them with instruments of husbandry and instruction. According to the treaty, the government's intent was to lead the Cherokees "to a greater degree of civilization and to become herdsmen and cultivators instead of remaining in a state of hunters." The government periodically allocated funds for the purchase of domestic animals and agricultural tools to be distributed among the Cherokees. In 1796, Washington wrote of his wishes for the Cherokees:

> Some among you already experience the advantage of keeping cattle and hogs; let all keep them and increase their numbers, and you will ever have plenty of meat. To these add sheep, and they will give you clothing as well as food. Your lands are good and of great extent. By proper management you can raise livestock, not only for your wants, but to sell to the White people. By using the plow you can vastly increase your crops of corn. You can also grow wheat, which makes the best of bread, as well as other useful grain. To these you will easily add flax, and cotton, which you may dispose of to the White people, or have it made up by your own women into clothing for yourselves. Your wives and daughters can soon learn to spin and weave. [38]

Many Cherokees welcomed the program because they realized how vulnerable their villages and communal fields were to further destruction. Chickamaugan Chief Bloody Fellow sought to stave off starvation. On a trip to Philadelphia to ask the President to fulfill promises made by the

[38] Treaty of Holston, 2 July 1791, in Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:30; George Washington, Address to the Cherokees, reprinted in the *Cherokee Phoenix,* 20 March 1828; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence,* 23-24; Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Nation*, 28-29; R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987), 6-7.

1791 treaty, he said, "The treaty mentions ploughs, hoes, cattle, and other things for a farm; this is what we want. Game is going fast away among us. We must plant corn and raise cattle, and we desire you to assist us." The Chickamauga Cherokees were among the most receptive of the Cherokees to the federal program to distribute agricultural implements. Pushed out of their homes in the Overhill settlements of East Tennessee, they had settled on the Tennessee and Coosa Rivers and their tributaries in north Alabama and northwest Georgia in the late eighteenth century. Doublehead, one of the most powerful of the Chickamauga leaders after Dragging Canoe died in 1792, settled on the Tennessee River at the Muscle Shoals of Alabama. He negotiated with the federal government for plows and looms and for government-built saw mills, grist mills, and cotton gins. In 1802, after seeing the Cherokee agent at the Green Corn Dance, Doublehead wrote to the agent that he had not been by to trade with the agent because he was "engaged in hunting and gathering my beef cattle. . . I have now one request to ask of you—that is to have me a boat Built—I want a good keel boat some 30 to 35 feet in length and 7 feet wide—I want her for the purpose of descending the river to Orleans and back . . . I am determined to buy the produce of this place and then return back by water. . . ." [39]

By the early 1800s, many Cherokees had undergone a significant transformation in their traditional lifestyle. They had abandoned their towns and were living as nuclear families in log cabins. They tended small farms, even though the land they sat on was owned by the tribe, and some became as proficient in agriculture as their white neighbors. In 1796, Benjamin Hawkins

[39] Bloody Fellow to George Washington, 1790, in McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 61; Doublehead to Return J. Meigs, 1802, in McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, *1789-1839,* 1985 (Reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 42; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 24; McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 16; Henry Thompson Malone, *Cherokees of the Old South: A People in Transition* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press), 145.

reported that Cherokee women were planting cotton and were ready to learn how to spin it into thread. White women were employed to teach spinning and weaving to Cherokee women who received cotton cards, looms, and spinning wheels from the federal government. By 1826, Cherokee women produced wool and cotton stockings, white and striped homespun, domestic plaids, wool blankets, and twilled, decorated coverlets for home consumption. Men and women developed entrepreneurial skills and purchased mills, stores, and ferries.[40]

This process of "civilization" was slow. There were factions of traditionalists who clung to old Cherokee values and customs. When Silas Dinsmoor visited the Cherokees in 1796, he found that many in the nation wanted to cling to the hide trade as the foundation of their economy. Only a few Cherokees engaged in farming and many of these were of mixed ancestry. One reason given by historian William McLoughlin for the reluctance of men to give up hunting is the loss of prestige and control of their women. Women gained in status as providers while men lost status when hunting was abandoned. Although nineteenth-century white men thought of this "civilizing" trend as an abandonment of traditional values, several scholars now conclude that the progressive Cherokees were merely acquiring skills to survive economically and politically—not abandoning their culture.[41]

The agents sent by the federal government to help teach the Cherokees new agricultural and cultural practices monitored the Cherokees' progress in adapting the new technologies. They eagerly reported the number of tools distributed and signs that the Cherokees were beginning to engage in textile manufacturing for personal use or the market. In December, 1801, the agent to the

[40] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 43; John Ridge to Albert Gallatin, 27 February 1826, in Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 34-35.
[41] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 61.

Cherokees, Return J. Meigs, reported that "the applications for wheels, cards, and looms, etc. are numerous. . . they raise considerable quantities of cotton for their own use. I have not hitherto been able to supply half the number who apply; they say they have cotton and cannot work it for want of wheels, cards, etc." In July 1801, Meigs reported that he had been "informed that there was 32 pieces of Cloth wove in Doublehead's Town within 14 months past." In January 1802, Meigs wrote "It appears to me from the present temper of the Indians that the raising of Cotton and sheep and manufacturing of these articles may be easily carried to a very considerable extent and thereby civilization even amongst those who have been strongly attached to the hunting life." Cotton and wool production were considered more civilized activities than the pursuit of game.[42]

By 1800, Cherokees were selling their geese, cattle, and hogs to neighboring white settlements. Cowhide was traded as deerskin once was. Cherokees obtained forty to sixty dollars per head for their horses while beef cattle fetched ten dollars each. Meigs reported that "the raising of cattle and making of cloth are their principle objects; they are not fond of expanding their tillage, but it must increase for their hunting is fast failing them." [43]

Jacob Scudder was a white trader who lived among the Cherokees from 1807 to 1831. In 1830, he estimated that approximately 3,000 Cherokees lived in North Georgia. Most lived near Etowah, or Hightower, at present-day Rome. He described the farms as small with only four to five acres under cultivation. "Their principal dependence for support is from what ground they cultivate in corn, pumpkins, potatoes, beans, etc." According to Scudder, the only wealthy Cherokee living in the area was Major Ridge, whose property was worth eight to ten thousand

[42] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 63.
[43] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 64.

dollars. Major Ridge's property on the Oostanaula River at Hightower boasted 280 acres of cultivated fields, both river-bottom and upland ground. Thurman Wilkins, biographer of Major and John Ridge, argues that the primary crop raised by Ridge was corn. Ridge also grew cotton, tobacco, wheat, oats, potatoes, and indigo. The Ridge orchards held 1,141 peach trees, 418 apple, 21 cherry, 11 quince, and several plum trees. Ridge owned a garden with ornamental shrubs and vegetables, a vineyard, a nursery, cattle, hogs, and sheep. His lands, plantation buildings, store, and ferry merited a combined value of $22,000. [44]

Ridge was one of the growing number of Cherokees who wholeheartedly embraced the new economy of the white man and the federal civilization program. Major Ridge sent his son to mission schools to learn to speak and write English, to study American law and commerce, and to learn Christianity. Ridge modeled his estate after the plantations of his rich white neighbors. He purchased slaves to do manual labor on his farm and became one of a growing number of Cherokees to warrant recognition by federal agents, missionaries, and other promoters of Cherokee progress for their thriving slave-labor plantations.[45]

In a letter to Albert Gallatin, a former member of Thomas Jefferson's cabinet noted for his advocacy of internal improvements, Major Ridge's son, John Ridge, explained that African slaves were held by mixed- and full-bloods of "distinguished talents." The slave-owning class of Cherokees conducted their farms "in the same style with the southern white farmers of equal ability in point of property." Ridge's son John lived six miles northeast of his father, along a toll

---

[44] McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 335-36; Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People*, 2d ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 188-189.
[45] John Ridge to Albert Gallatin, 27 February 27 1826, in Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 31-32.

road owned by the elder. John owned eighteen slaves, a two-storied house with two smoke-houses, a stable, and a corncrib. His plantation, named Running Waters, contained seven fields, totaling 419 acres of cleared upland. John grew the same crops as his father, with corn the dominant product. His plentiful orchards included 493 peach trees, 100 apple, 9 cherry, 6 quince, and 7 pear trees.[46]

One of the largest slaveholders in the Cherokee Nation from 1800 until his violent death in 1809 was the mixed blood James Vann. Vann's plantation was located in northwest Georgia east of what is now Chatsworth. By 1800, Vann hired an overseer to manage his plantation and slaves. He owned 400 cattle, 100 horses, and many hogs. In keeping with the practice of many Cherokees, Vann allowed his livestock to forage in the forests until his slaves rounded them up for sale or butchering in late fall. In 1829, Vann's son-in-law owned six or seven hundred acres "and negroes enough to manage it and clear as much more as he pleases." His operations produced five thousand bushels of corn annually. The Vanns and other Cherokees used their slaves to grow wheat, oats, tobacco, rye, corn, indigo, and potatoes, as well as cotton.[47]

The Beginning of Cotton Culture in the South

The spread of cotton agriculture and slavery across the South following the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 has been well-documented. Grains, tobacco, and indigo ruled the market in the South through the end of the eighteenth century. The shift to cotton began when southern planters were forced to look for new market crops after prices for indigo declined between 1792

[46] John Ridge to Albert Gallatin, 27 February 27 1826, in Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 33-35; Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy,* 190.
[47] Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society: 1540-1866*, 1979 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, first paper printing 1987), 97.

and 1800. Then after the War of 1812, farmers in upper South Carolina and upper Georgia shifted from tobacco to cotton when the price of tobacco dropped. Between the 1790s and 1840s, planters in North Carolina shifted back and forth between grains and tobacco as their prices fluctuated.[48]

As late as 1809, cotton was still only a secondary crop in the South. Corn, which had dominated southern agriculture for 800 years, remained the primary crop. Production of cotton was still concentrated in eastern Georgia and South Carolina. Only seven percent of the cotton produced in the South was raised outside of those two regions. Over the next three decades, as demand for cotton grew, planters and their slaves moved rapidly into the cotton-belt of the South. The belt stretched from South Carolina to eastern Texas and was determined primarily by soil and climatic conditions. Cotton requires a minimum of 200 to 210 frostless days and 20 inches of rainfall. The amount of rainfall needed for cotton varies with the growing season. Heavy rainfall during the early spring prevents the proper development of the plant's root system. As one cotton grower advised newcomers to the profession, "There is no use in trying the hardihood of the plant. It is unlike corn—it has a tap root, grows in dry weather, and unless the land has not been properly prepared, or remarkably dry, it will improve by hot or dry weather—but corn having superficial roots, should be planted early as possible, that it may ripen before drought sets in." Another problem identified with cotton that prevented it from growing in many areas of the South was that rainfall during harvest time would cause the cotton boll to fall

[48] Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 64-65.

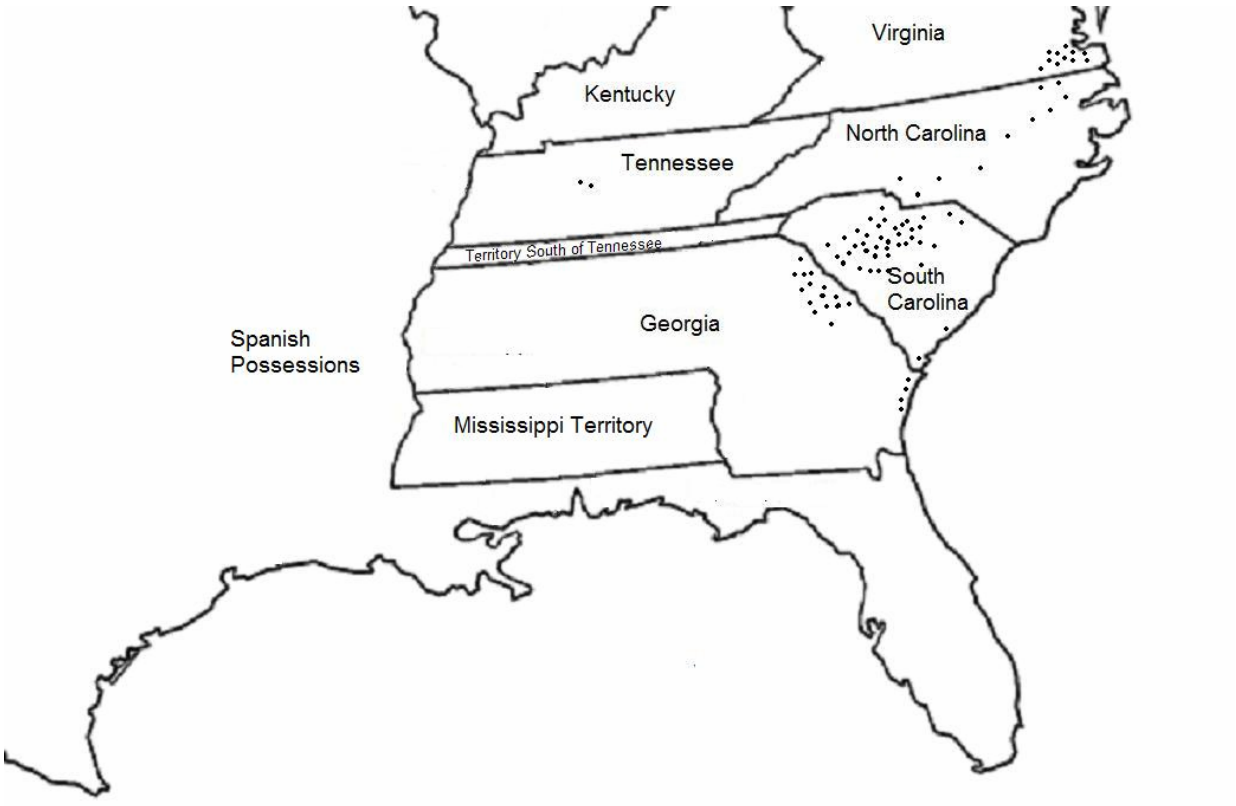

Figure 4. Southern Cotton Production in 1801. This map shows concentrations of cotton production in 1801. Based on a map in Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 66.

off. Planters feared ill-timed rain because cotton could not be picked when it was wet. The rainfall pattern in the southern cotton belt is well-suited to cotton agriculture. Rains tend to increase from spring to midsummer and then decrease before harvest time. However, the rainfall in much of the mountainous region where the Cherokees lived was too heavy and unpredictable to guarantee a successful cotton crop.[49]

Soil also determined regions where cotton could be profitably grown. The soils of the South varied significantly. The rich alluvial deposits on the Mississippi flood plain provided the best cotton conditions while the soils of the Coastal Plain below the fall line are below average in fertility. After the Mississippian alluvial soils, the most fertile soils in the cotton belt were the black calcareous soils of the Black Prairie regions of central Mississippi and Alabama. The soils in the southern Piedmont of Alabama and Georgia were more productive than the sandy soils of the Piedmont regions of North or South Carolina. The red calcarious soil along the Tennessee River in north Alabama and south central Tennessee also attracted cotton slave culture.[50]

The transportation revolution of the early nineteenth century played a role in the development of the southern cotton market. Cotton planters preferred to use water transportation to ship their goods to ports on the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. After 1811, steamboat traffic grew rapidly on the Mississippi River. Drought, floods, snags, cascades, and other obstacles

---

[49] Fogel, *Without Consent*, 65; Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 14-15; J. H. Hammond, "Governor Hammond's Report," in J. A. Turner, *Culture of Cotton: Its Natural History, Chemical Analysis, Trade, and Consumption, and Embracing a History of Cotton and the Cotton Gin* (New York: Orange Judd, Publisher, 1865), 22-23; J. H. Hammond, "Report of the Committee of the Barnwell Agricultural Society, on the Culture of Cotton," in *Culture of Cotton: Its Natural History, Chemical Analysis, Trade, and Consumption, and Embracing a History of Cotton and the Cotton Gin* (New York: Orange Judd, Publisher, 1865 edited by J. A. Turner), 26.

[50] Fogel, *Without Consent*, 65; Wright, *The Political Economy*, 18-22.

prevented steamboat traffic on the upper Tennessee until the middle 1820s. This made transportation of cotton from East Tennessee and parts of Middle Tennessee and northern Alabama to New Orleans very difficult.[51]

Tennessee Frontier and Industry

By the 1790s, Tennessee farmers had established a thriving frontier economy and were engaged in international trade. They drove hogs, horses, and cattle to the Eastern states and engaged in corn whiskey production and iron manufacturing. By 1800, planters in Middle Tennessee were shipping tobacco and a small amount of cotton to New Orleans. By 1810, the Nashville area boasted four cotton mills. Most fiber goods, however, were still produced in individual homes. Knoxville, located in East Tennessee, where cotton was still not a prominent crop, boasted small spinning factories by 1820. By the 1830s, the southern part of Middle Tennessee and West Tennessee were engaged in the raising and exportation of cotton. Although Middle Tennessee claimed twenty-five cotton mills by 1840, cotton agriculture was more important to West Tennessee than to either Middle or East Tennessee. Because of its location on the Mississippi, Memphis became a major market center for cotton. Middle Tennessee raised livestock and grew tobacco and other crops.[52]

Two of the main market products of East Tennessee, before and after the Cherokee removal of 1838, were hogs and cattle. Farmers drove thousands of heads of beef and hogs every year to markets in the Lower South. East Tennessee was a region of smaller, diversified farms with a

[51] Fogel, *Without Consent,* 67.
[52] John R. Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 179-181, 188, 192-193.

lower population of slaves than Middle or West Tennessee. The topography and soil of East Tennessee prohibited large-scale cotton plantation economy and, instead, farmers raised corn, wheat, oats, barley, flax, hemp, and rye. Cotton was grown primarily for local consumption in East Tennessee. Throughout the antebellum period, corn remained a major product in all three sections of Tennessee. In 1840, the state led the nation in corn production. However, the growing importance of the cotton economy of Middle and West Tennessee would influence Tennessee politicians like Andrew Jackson and John McMinn to agitate for Cherokee land cessions in the 1810s.[53]

1809 Davis Survey of Cherokee Country

In March 1809, Agent Return J. Meigs printed copies of the results of a survey of the Cherokee Nation. George Barber Davis, hired by Meigs, spent two years on the survey. The result was a statistical table designed to report the success of the civilization program and progress of the Cherokees toward an agricultural-based economy. The 1809 survey reported that the traditional town system of the Cherokees had dissolved. As they adopted the family farming system recommended by white Americans, they dispersed from the traditional villages and settled along rivers and streams. They did, however, manage to maintain community-based traditions that centered on a shared town house, including festivals, dances, and ball games.[54]

The report was not organized by region, so it is difficult to distinguish between the settlements in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Using the report, William G.

[53] Robert Tracy McKenzie, *One South or Many? Plantation Belt and Upcountry in Civil War-Era Tennessee* (Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38.
[54] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 168-69.

McLoughlin estimates that approximately 30 percent or 3,500 Cherokees lived in East Tennessee, 30 percent lived in north Georgia, 30 percent lived in the Valley Towns of North Carolina, and the remainder, or about 2,000, lived in the Chickamauga Lower Towns of Alabama. Davis recorded 6,519 horses, 19,165 black cattle, 1,037 sheep, 19,778 hogs, 13 gristmills, 3 sawmills, 1,572 spinning wheels, 429 looms, and 567 plows. Davis also reported three saltpeter works and two gunpowder mills. He did not record the number of acres or types of crops under cultivation. Nor did he report the number of artisans like blacksmiths or carpenters that lived in Cherokee country, or list ferries, stores, or taverns. But it is clear that the civilization program had an impact on the Cherokees by 1809. As the Cherokees spread out across their lands, cleared small fields, built modest log cabins, and adopted Euro-American agricultural practices, their lands were becoming more valuable to whites. This became evident in the middle of the 1810s when the federal government began negotiations for Cherokee lands located on the Tennessee River in north Alabama. [55]

The Tennessee and Alabama Land Cessions

Andrew Jackson, Middle Tennessee plantation owner, Indian fighter, and victorious general of the War of 1812, served as treaty commissioner for the Southern Indians from 1815 to 1820. During that time, Jackson obtained a number of controversial land cessions in Tennessee and Alabama from multiple tribes including the Cherokees. Jackson benefitted financially from several of these land cessions through land speculation in the newly acquired territories. Jackson and his close friend and business partner, John Coffee, formed a company which bought newly ceded land

[55] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 171-72.

at Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River in Alabama. Jackson first acquired acreage at the Muscle Shoals in 1797 as part of the failed Yazoo land controversy. These and other Yazoo land titles were later declared invalid, but southern land speculators and plantation owners continued to covet the lands along the Tennessee River in North Alabama and in Middle Tennessee for cotton production. Much of this land in Alabama was rich, black soil suitable for cotton agriculture. Between 1814 and 1816, cotton prices doubled, making the Cherokee land along the Tennessee River very valuable. Finally, with the Treaty of 1819, the Cherokees ceded the best cotton-producing lands in their territory in north Alabama and Middle Tennessee to the federal government and the lands became available for public sale.[56]

In 1818, the Legislative Council and House of Representatives of the Alabama Territory authorized a census of the territory. Executed in 1820, the survey excluded the lands in the eastern part of the state that still belonged to the Cherokees and Creeks. The survey did include lands recently ceded by the Cherokees and Chickasaws in the northern part of the state along the Tennessee River. Unfortunately, most of the records from this census are lost. Many of the records that remain contain only columns listing household members by age, sex, and color. The records of Limestone County, created in 1818 from Cherokee lands that were located in the southern-most part of the Highland Rim Province, are one of the most complete sets of records and provide information on land under cultivation. In 1820, Limestone County contained 6,074 whites, 802 people of color, 2,923 slaves, 3,181 acres under cultivation, 520 cotton gins, 540

[56] Marquis James, *The Life of Andrew Jackson* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938), 277, 335; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* (New York: Hill and Wang, a Division of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1993), 4-5, 63; Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 283-292; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 198-199, 202, 207.

saws, and 2 mills, and produced 21,267 bales of cotton. The census did not gather information on other types of crops produced, suggesting that cotton was considered the dominant crop in this former Cherokee region. This is confirmed by the fact that only 6 properties surveyed did not report any bales of cotton produced. From this survey, we can see that new white settlers on the north side of the Tennessee River in Alabama, like their neighbors further north in the Highland Rim and Nashville Basin, quickly converted lands sparsely settled by the Cherokees to cotton farms. This clustering of cotton plantations in North Alabama and Middle Tennessee is evident in the map of the Cotton Belt in 1821. (See Figure 5.)[57]

The Cherokee Census of 1824

In 1824, the Cherokee Nation conducted a self-census to measure its progress in adopting white agricultural practices. The census reported a total population of 14,972. This included Cherokees, whites, and negroes. Of this total, 938 were negroes. The two largest counties in population were the Coosawattee district with 2,611 souls and the Aquohee district with 2,583 souls. The next largest population was located in Chattooga, followed by Chickamauga, Ahmohee, Hickory Log, High Tower, and finally, Tahquoa, which reported 1,383 souls. Chattooga reported the most number of negroes, most of whom were probably slaves, at 292. Six cotton gins were recorded for the entire nation: two each in the Chattooga and Ahmohee districts, one in the district of Chickamauga, and one in Hickory Log. The Chattooga, Chickamauga, and Ahmohee districts lay on the Tennessee River which was a main traffic route for transportation

[57] *Alabama Census Returns: 1820*, Marie Owen Bankhead, ed. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1967), 5, 7-9, 91-149.

Figure 5. The Cotton Belt in 1821. Based on a map in Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 16. Wright's map was adapted from United States Department of Agriculture, *Atlas of Agriculture*, Part V, Advance Sheets (December 15, 1915).

of cotton. The Chattooga district was located predominantly in Alabama and extended east into Georgia. The Hickory Log district lay on the extreme southeast end of the Blue Ridge physiographic province next to the Piedmont region. The Coosawatee district, which had no cotton gins, reported 397 spinning wheels, the largest number in the nation. At 369, it also reported the third largest number of sheep and the fourth largest number of looms at 113. The Aquohee district, which reported no cotton gins, had the largest number of sheep at 765, the largest number of looms at 145, and the third largest number of spinning wheels at 346. The Hickory Log District reported the second largest number of sheep, 397, the second largest number of spinning wheels, 368, and one cotton gin. The large numbers of sheep, spinning wheels, and looms in the Aquohee and Coosawatee districts, which reported no cotton gins, suggests that the Cherokees in those districts were using their looms and spinning wheels to produce woolen products and not just cotton products. The Aquohee, Taquohee, and Coosawattee districts, none of which reported cotton gins, were located within the mountainous Blue Ridge Province whose climate made cotton agriculture more difficult than in the other districts. In all, the Cherokee nation reported 769 looms, 2,428 spinning wheels, 2,917 sheep, 13 sawmills, 19 grist mills, 1 threshing machine, and 2 unknown types of mills.[58]

As the 1824 census suggests, the practice of cotton agriculture in the Cherokee Nation varied from one area to the next. This is seen in the reports of missionaries who established schools and agricultural operations among the Cherokees. On July 13, 1818, the proprietors of the Brainerd mission to the Cherokees recorded the progress of their crops in their journal:

[58] Legislature of Cherokee Nation, "Census of 1824," *Cherokee Phoenix*, 18 June 1828.

> The seasons of the year have been ordered very favorably in this part of the country. Crops every where look finely. We have about 7 acres of rye and oats (which we are now gathering) something more than 30 acres of corn, about 3 acres of Irish and 2 of sweet potatoes, and a small patch of cotton. All these promise well, except the cotton—It appears, from frequent experiments of others, as well as our little experience, that this part of the country does not well suit the cotton plant.[59]

No other mention of cotton is made in the journal which covers the period from 1817 to 1823, while corn is mentioned many times. The Brainerd Mission was located at what is now Chattanooga, Tennessee on the southern edge of the Ridge and Valley Province and the southwest edge of the Cumberland Plateau.[60]

Further south in Georgia, near present-day Chatsworth and the home of James and Joseph Vann, the Moravian missionaries at Springplace had better luck with cotton. The mission also grew corn, hay, barley, wheat, flax, oats, beans, squash, pumpkins, turnips, sweet potatoes, peaches, and apples. The missionaries taught the pupils farming practices and gave each a plot of ground for their personal use. They distributed treats in the form of dried apple slices, walnuts, and peanuts when the students picked cotton from the mission fields. [61]

---

[59] Joyce B. Phillips and Paul Gary Phillips, eds., *The Brainerd Journal: A Mission to the Cherokees, 1817-1823* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 72.
[60] Phillips, *The Brainerd Journal*.
[61] Rowena McClinton, ed., *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 23, 32, 127, 136, 489.

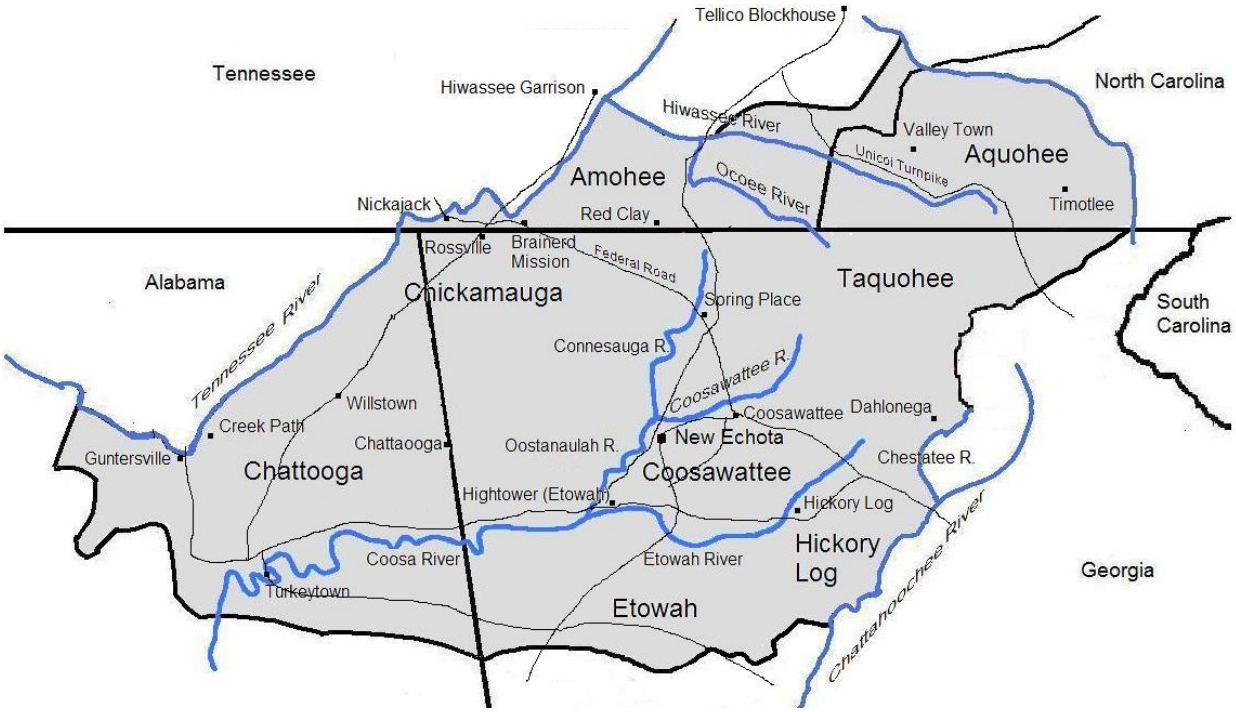

Figure 6. The Eight Cherokee Districts, about 1825. Based on a map in Henry Thompson Malone, *Cherokees of the Old South: A People in Transition* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1956), x.

Table 1. Cherokee Nation Censuses of 1809 and 1824

Survey Item	Meigs's 1809 Census	Cherokee Nation Census of 1824	Percent Change 1809 to 1824
Cherokees	12,395	16,060	30
Black Slaves	583	1,277	119
Whites	314	215	- 29
Students	94	314	234
Schools	5	18	260
Looms	429	762	78
Spinning Wheels	1,572	2,486	58
Wagons	30	172	473
Ploughs	567	2,923	416
Horses	6,519	7,683	18
Black Cattle	19,165	22,531	18
Swine	19,778	46,732	136
Sheep	1,037	2,566	147
Goats	*	430	*
Grist Mills	13	36	177
Saw Mills	3	13	333
Powder Mill	1	1	*
Blacksmith Shops	*	62	*
Stores	*	9	*
Tan-yards	*	2	*
Threshing Machine	*	1	*

Table 1 shows increases in population and agricultural machinery from the 1809 to 1824 Cherokee censuses. Note the increase in hog and sheep production and the decrease in the number of whites living in the Cherokee Nation. Based on Table 1 in Douglas C. Wilms, "Cherokee Indian Land Use in Georgia, 1800-1838," Ph.d. Dissertation (University of Georgia, 1973), 31.

Missionaries, Cherokee leaders, and government agents continued to monitor the economic progress of the Cherokees and used cotton agriculture as one measure. According to John Ridge, Cherokees living on large plantations on the Tennessee River in 1826 produced cotton for the commercial market. He predicted that many other Cherokees would begin to produce cotton for commercial purposes and that cotton would soon become the staple commodity for the entire nation. This prediction, as we will see later in this chapter, did not become true.[62]

In 1825, David Brown, a young, educated Cherokee who was respected by the local missionaries for his efforts to translate the New Testament into Cherokee, wrote a letter to agent Thomas L. McKenney boasting of the progress of the Cherokees in adopting white ways. Brown described the beauty of the land where cattle and horses were plentiful and pigs, sheep, and goats thrived. Apple and peach orchards abounded and the Cherokees produced cheese and butter. He described the crops raised by the Cherokees: Indian corn, wheat, potatoes, oats, cotton, tobacco, and indigo. "The natives carry on considerable trade with adjoining states; and some of them export cotton in boats, down the Tennessee to the Mississippi, and down that river to New Orleans," he reported. Brown also listed public roads, cotton and woolen goods manufacturing, and 1,217 African slaves in the nation. Brown, Ridge, and other Cherokee advocates were anxious to show how far they had progressed with the hope that their white neighbors would accept their right to remain on their ancestral lands. They emphasized the cultivation of cotton and counted the number of slaves owned by Cherokees to highlight their progress in fitting in with white southern culture. Efforts by Cherokee leaders in North Georgia to convert Cherokee

[62] John Ridge to Albert Gallatin, 27 February 27 1826, in Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 36.

agriculture from corn to crops that were more indicative of progress in the eyes of the federal government were abruptly halted a few years later when actions by the Georgia legislature resulted in a flood of white settlers moving into the Cherokee Nation.[63]

The 1832 Land Lottery and the 1835 Census

The land lottery surveys authorized by the state of Georgia to benefit white Georgia residents commenced in April 1832 and divided the land into 40 and 160 acre parcels. The lottery took place that same year, but winners were not legally allowed to claim their new property until later. Ignoring the law, lottery winners began to swarm into the Cherokee Nation and to evict the Cherokees from the farms they had won. Many Cherokees in Georgia packed up and moved across the state line into either Alabama or Tennessee.[64]

The non-gold regions were as popular with intruders as the gold lands. Several prominent Cherokees, whose lands did not contain any gold, were ousted from their homes by intruders. When John Ross returned to his home at Head-of-Coosa (present-day Rome, Georgia) in August 1834 after a trip to Washington, D. C., he found that his house and orchards had been advertised for sale in the local papers. Ross temporarily saved his home by taking the interlopers to county court in *John Ross and Others v. Clyatt and Others*; however, the following year he faced more

---

[63] Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy,* 190-91.

[64] "An act to authorize and survey the disposition of lands . . .," 21 Dec 1830, *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1830,* 127-43; "An act to lay out the gold region . . .," *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia Passed at Milledgeville at an Annual Session in October, November, and December 1831* (Milledgeville, Georgia: Camak and Ragland, Printers, 1832), 164-67; "An act to protect the Cherokee Indians . . .," *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia Passed at Milledgeville at an Annual Session in October, November, and December 1832* (Milledgeville, Georgia: Camak and Ragland, Printers, 1833), 102-105.

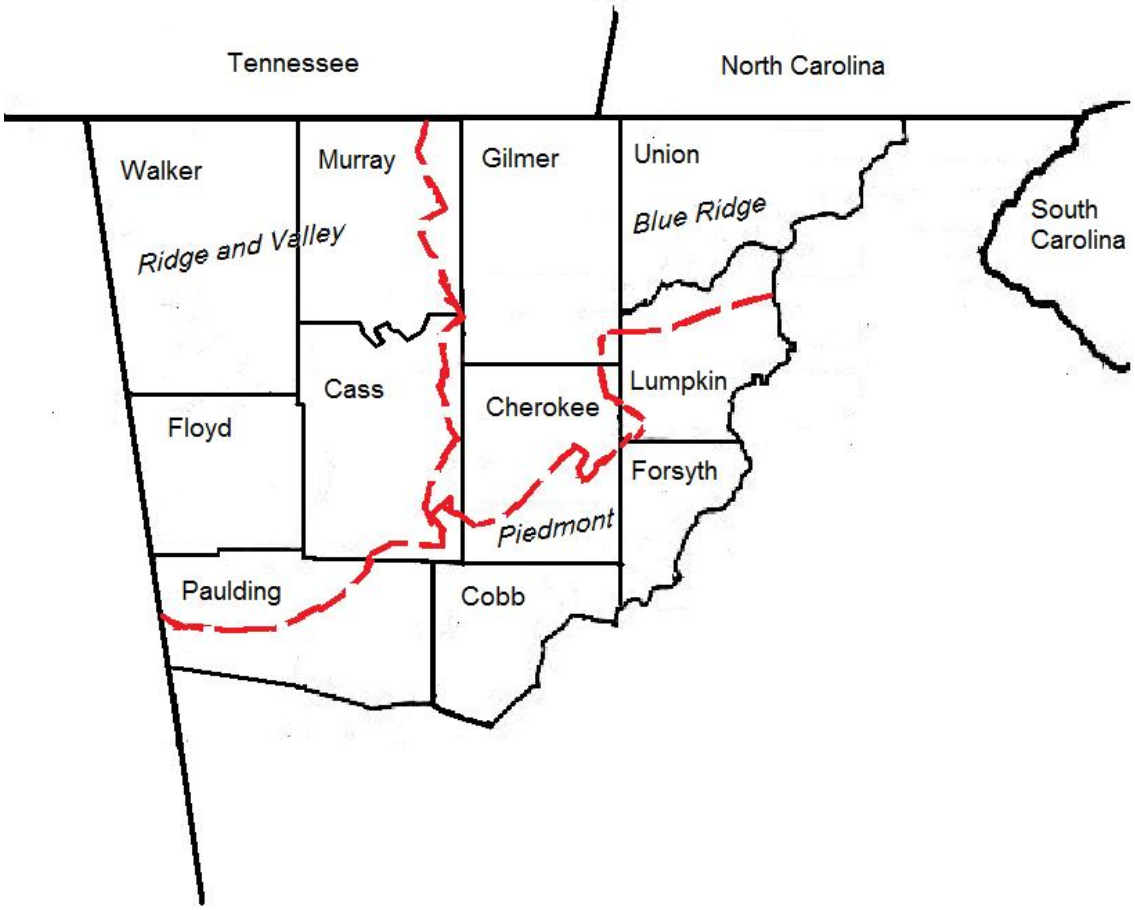

Figure 7. Cherokee Georgia in 1832. This map shows the physiographic provinces in relation to the counties newly formed from Cherokee lands in the northwest corner of the state. Based on a map (Figure 4) in Douglas C. Wilms, "Cherokee Indian Land Use in Georgia, 1800-1838," Ph.d. Dissertation (University of Georgia, 1973), 44.

problems. In the spring of 1835, he returned home from Philadelphia and Washington and found his family had been evicted by a legal claimant with the help of the head of the Georgia Guard William N. Bishop. In another case, the rich mixed-blood family of Joseph Vann, his wife, and their children were caught in a gun battle over their red brick plantation home in 1834. The year before he evicted Ross from his home at Head-of-Coosa, Bishop tried to take illegal possession of Vann's Springplace mansion. However he was challenged by Spencer Riley, a local constable who lived on the Vann property and wanted the property for himself. The Vann family found themselves seeking safety in a single room in the mansion while Bishop and Riley fought over the property. Riley was shot and the Vanns escaped safely to a second plantation on the Tennessee River near present-day Harrison, Tennessee.[65]

Another survey of Cherokee lands was conducted in 1835. Unlike the 1832 survey, the 1835 census was federally mandated. When Congress passed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the act provided funds to buy Indian lands which were to be purchased through treaties. The 1835 census of the Cherokees was held in anticipation of a treaty that would purchase all of their eastern lands for a negotiated sum. The purpose of the survey was "to fix a true estimate upon the value of the country in case the whole tribe does not approve of the gross sum fixed upon already." The 1835 census documented Cherokee households by the name of the head and included a count of residents by age and sex. Residences were identified by the stream that they were located on. Columns in the census included number of dwellings, acreage under cultivation,

[65] William N. Bishop to John Ross, 17 March 1835, in Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Papers of Chief John Ross* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 333; Gary E. Moulton, *John Ross, Cherokee Chief* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 56-57, 62; Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 179.

sales of corn and wheat, and the number of mills, ferries, farmers, spinners, weavers, mechanics, slaves, and readers of Cherokee and English in each household. [66]

The reason why the federal government decided to include some items in the 1835 census and not others is unclear. In their discussion of the 1835 census, Theda Perdue and Michael Green point out that wheat production was probably included because missionaries and agents encouraged Native Americans to grow wheat. It was widely grown in Europe and was considered a more civilized crop than Indian corn. Figures for cotton production, however, were not gathered, and as has been discussed earlier, advocates of Cherokee progress readily boasted about the planting of cotton and the number of cotton gins in the Cherokee Nation. Leading Cherokees also emulated southern cotton culture through the creation of stately plantations. The lack of inclusion of cotton production in the 1835 census suggests that the census designers, Secretary of War Lewis Cass and Major Benjamin Currey of the U. S. Army, did not consider cotton to be a major crop in Cherokee country in comparison to corn. [67]

Archaeologist Brett H. Riggs, who studied the 1835 census results for North Carolina, points out that the census takers encountered some resistance from the Cherokees. Their lack of cooperation on items such as the number of bushels of wheat and corn sold, which the census taker could not personally view, means that the numbers are subject to error. The results of the

[66] Benjamin F. Currey to Lewis Cass, 7 September, 1835, *1835 Cherokee Census: Monograph Two* (Park Hill, OK: The Trail of Tears Association, Oklahoma Chapter, 2002), Introduction.
[67] Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 49-50; *1835 Cherokee Census.*

1835 census, should, therefore, be considered carefully, as should each of the surveys and censuses examined in this chapter.[68]

The results showed a total population of 18,335 in the Cherokee Nation in 1835. This included 16,542 Cherokees, 1,592 slaves, and 201 whites married to Cherokees. Georgia reported the largest population with 9,790 souls, but not the largest percentage of slaves per capita. Tennessee, with a total population of 3,087, claimed 480 slaves or 15.5 percent of its population while Georgia had 776 slaves or 8 percent of its population. Tennessee also reported the largest number of whites married to Cherokees at 79 compared to 68 whites in Georgia. [69]

Figures for Cherokee lands within the state of Tennessee indicate that the Cherokees had 10,792 acres in cultivation. The acres are not broken down by crop, so it is impossible to make confident statements about corn and cotton production by acreage. The number of households cultivating acres, however, can be compared to the number of households that produced corn. Of 397 farms with acres under cultivation, only 38 did not grow any corn. Cherokees in Tennessee produced 139,279 bushels annually and sold 27,088 of these. These farmers produced only 992 bushels of wheat annually and sold 192. Figures for the other states are similar, with low production of wheat compared to corn and nearly all Cherokees growing some corn. In Alabama, Cherokees cultivated 7,252 acres, produced 89,676 bushels of corn, sold 16,790 bushels of corn, and only 8 of 198 Cherokees farmers did not grow any corn. Figures for North Carolina include 6,837.75 acres under cultivation, 78,632 bushels of corn produced, 5,883 bushels of corn sold, and only 7 of 624 households with lands under cultivation not producing corn. Finally, the

---

[68] Brett H. Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households in Southwestern North Carolina: Material Perspectives on Ethnicity and Cultural Differentiation" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1999), 1:72.
[69] *1835 Cherokee Census.*

statistics in Georgia show 19,305 acres under cultivation, 268,114 bushels of corn produced, 60,148 bushels of corn sold, and only 65 of 1,236 planters not growing corn. [70]

Douglas H. Wilms reviewed the 1835 census in his study of land use in Cherokee Georgia from 1800 to 1838. Wilms reported that the counties of Walker, Murray, and Cass, all of which lie in the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, ranked highest in bushels of corn produced per acre under cultivation. The average yield per acre for all of Cherokee Georgia was 13.8 bushels. The yields for the three Ridge and Valley counties ranged from 18.7 to 20.9 bushels. Wilms also calculated that the Cherokees sold 25 percent of their corn. A good portion of this corn may have been sold to feed the huge droves of hogs that were driven through Cherokee Georgia each year from Tennessee and Kentucky to middle Georgia and Alabama. A herd of 1,000 hogs consumed an estimated 24 bushels of corn per day. In 1836, over 40,000 hogs were driven to the cotton regions of Alabama and Georgia. The provision of corn at stock stands and public houses provided a lucrative business for the Cherokees.[71]

In his comprehensive study of Cherokee land use in north Georgia in the four decades before removal, Wilms concluded that corn was the primary crop produced and that some cotton was produced for personal consumption. Cherokees cultivated a large number of fruit trees and occasionally sold excess livestock and grain to travelers and neighboring states. The corncrib was the most common outbuilding.[72]

---

[70] *1835 Cherokee Census.*
[71] Douglas C. Wilms, "Cherokee Indian Land Use in Georgia, 1800-1838" (Ph.d. Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1973), 82, 91.
[72] Wilms, "Cherokee Indian Land Use," 176.

The 1836 Evaluations

Property evaluations on Cherokee lands were performed in 1836 in preparation for the removal of the Cherokees. These evaluations assigned values to the amount of cleared land, fencing, cabins, stables, and outbuildings such as smoke, potato, and hen houses. An examination of the property evaluations for Tennessee shows several grist mills and ferries, several thousand peach trees, and many other fruit trees including apple, cherry, plum, and pear. The evaluations do not describe what crops were planted. They also do not list any cotton gins. The fact that cotton gins do not show in the evaluations may be attributed to the fact that many of the early gins were small and the federal government expected them to be transported to Indian Territory. The evaluations also listed many corn cribs.[73]

An examination of property valuations conducted between 1835 and 1839 in Alabama yields different results. A number of Cherokees in Alabama produced cotton and owned cotton machinery. Edward Gunter, a prominent mixed-blood Cherokee who lived in the Creek Path area on the Tennessee River at what is now Guntersville, Alabama, owned a cotton gin house valued at $300, a cotton shack valued at $6, one gin head and one set of running gear valued at $236, a $40 cotton press, and 244 acres where he grew both corn and cotton. His brother, John Gunter, also owned a cotton gin house and cotton press. Other Gunter family members, Samuel and George, owned loom houses and several fields dedicated to cotton. Samuel also owned a gin and a press. John G. Ross, John Ross's nephew who lived in Wills Valley, owned a modest cotton house. Samuel Neal of Gunters Valley owned a cotton press, a gin, and a cotton house worth $460. James Lasley, a white man connected to the Cherokees through marriage, owned a new

[73] *Cherokee Property Evaluations in Tennessee*: 1836.

cotton gin with 50 saws located at Turkey Town on the Coosa River. Several other valuations list cotton houses, loom sheds, or fields dedicated to cotton.[74]

Using archaeological surveys, the 1835 census, property valuations, claims filed for lost property or spoliation claims, and other primary sources, Brett Riggs has determined that the average Cherokee household in North Carolina at the time of removal had 5.6 members and was comprised mostly (89%) of fullbloods. Although mills, ferries, and slaves were in the area, the typical Cherokee family did not own such wealthy property. Wealthier *metis* Cherokees, like John Christie, owned many fruit trees and additional property other than the primary homestead. The Christie family also operated an 80-gallon whiskey still. The 1835 census indicates that the Christies produced 600 bushels of corn on 70 acres. Undoubtedly, a large portion of this corn wound up in the six whiskey barrels and 19 hogsheads of corn liquor reported in Christie's spoliation claims.[75]

The North Carolina spoliation claims include a number of types of agricultural implements such as plows and hoes, woodworking tools, blacksmith tools, gold pans, and gold machinery. The claims also show that the North Carolina Cherokees cultivated a variety of crops including corn, beans, pumpkins, sweet and Irish potatoes, oats, rye, wheat, tobacco, cotton, onions, and melons.[76]

A number of Cherokees reported the loss of raw materials. The claims for these raw materials provide clues to the production of commodities. Ninety-eight households reported the

---

[74] Property Valuations 1835-39, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75. The Alabama valuations have not been placed on microfilm or published. These valuation extracts are courtesy of Mike Wren of the Alabama Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association.
[75] Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 2: 369, 400; 1: 350.
[76] Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 2: 628-32; 1: 144, 350.

loss of raw wool or cotton fibers, while 26 households reported the loss of both. The small quantities lost suggest to Riggs that the Cherokees in the area grew cotton on a small scale for personal use only. A number of households reported the loss of corn and fodder in large enough quantities to suggest that maize was produced for the market. Sixty-nine families claimed the loss of more than 20 bushels of stored corn. One of the local store owners, a man named Hunter, is known to have stocked corn for sale to hog drivers who passed his establishment. [77]

Riggs's study area (See Figure 8) is part of the Blue Ridge Province, a mountainous area that includes the Unaka, Nantahala, and Snowbird mountain ranges. The Cherokees occupied the lower elevations below 2800 feet. The average annual rainfall at the lower elevations is approximately 60 inches, with the heaviest precipitation occurring in January. The growing period is 195 frost-free days. Since cotton generally requires at least 200 days to grow, the North Carolina mountains are not conducive to bountiful crops of cotton. [78]

Corn versus Cotton after the 1838 Removal

Donald L. Kemmerer's comparison of antebellum corn and cotton production in the South reveals that corn production outperformed cotton production throughout the entire period. Eleven of the top sixteen corn producing states in 1849 were located in the South. The three leading corn states in the entire nation were Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. The four leading cotton-producing states in 1849 were Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. These four states produced 75 percent of all cotton in 1849. (See Table 2.) Although the combined value of their corn was only 60 percent of the value of their cotton, total acres planted in corn

[77] Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 1: 246-48.
[78] Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 1: 40, 43.

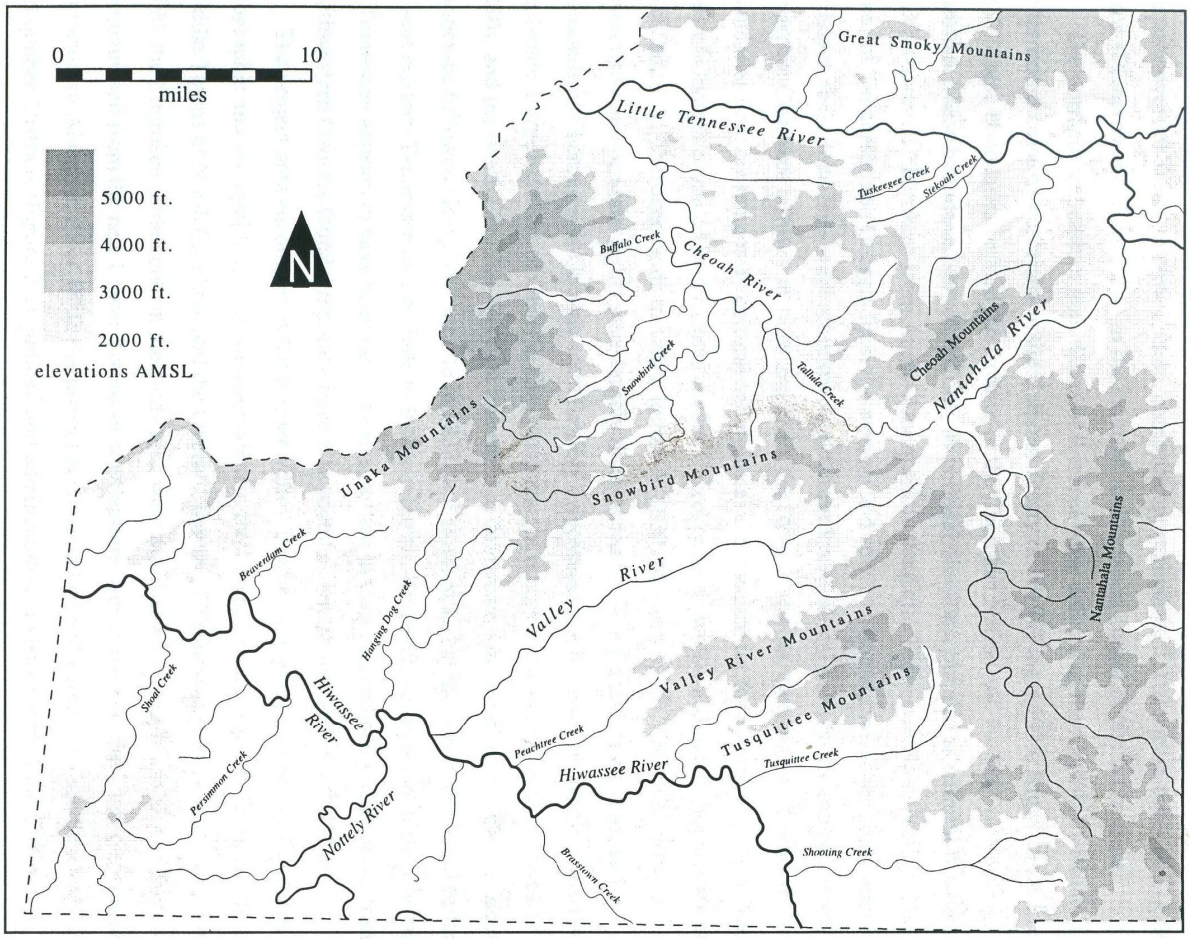

Figure 2.3. Major physiographic features of southwestern North Carolina.

Figure 8. Removal Period Cherokee Lands in Southwestern North Carolina. From Brett H. Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households in Southwestern North Carolina: Material Perspectives on Ethnicity and Cultural Differentiation" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1999), 1: 37.

Table 2. Cotton and Corn in the South in 1849

Crop and Region	Pounds in Millions	Acreage in Millions	Value in Millions
Cotton in All Southern States	987.4	1.9 to 4.9	$106.6
Corn in All Southern States	19,961.5	24.95	199.6
Cotton in 4 top-producing Cotton States	739.5	1.4 to 3.7	79.9
Corn in 4 top-producing Cotton States	5,462.9	6.97	54.6

Table 2 shows that corn production far outweighed cotton production in the South in 1849 in both pounds produced and value. In the four leading cotton producing states of Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, over seven times more pounds of corn was produced and twice as many acres were planted in corn as in cotton. Cotton beat corn production only in profit in the four leading cotton-producing states. This table is taken from Table 3 in Donald L. Kemmerer's "The Pre-Civil War South's Leading Crop, Corn," *Agricultural History* 23 (Oct., 1949): 236-39. Kemmerer lists the following sources for his table: Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington, 1933), 2:1027, 1039; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 Abstract* (Washington, 1853), 88-89; and *Eight Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture of the United States in 1860* (Washington, 1864), 3:xlvii, xciv.

exceeded those planted in cotton. Table 3 shows the number of bushels of corn and bales of cotton and their values produced in 1839, 1849, and 1859. Although it is not possible to directly compare bushels and bales, it is possible to compare values of the crops. As the table shows, the overall value of the southern cotton crop never exceeded the value of the southern corn crop during the pre-war period.[79]

The 1840 Census

A closer look at the counties carved out of the 1819-1838 boundaries of the Cherokee Nation confirms that cotton was not a major crop in the decade after removal. The two largest counties created from Cherokee lands in North Carolina were Cherokee and Macon Counties. The 1840 census records for these counties show no pounds of cotton gathered while 167,167 bushels and 125,820 bushels of Indian corn were harvested for the two respective counties. This is compared to nearly 24 million bushels of Indian corn and approximately 52 million pounds of cotton for the entire state. Cherokee and Macon counties reported no cotton manufactories while the state as a whole reported 25 manufactories.[80]

The eleven counties that were created from Cherokee Georgia were Cass, Chattooga, Cherokee, Cobb, Floyd, Forsyth, Lumpkin, Macon, Paulding, Union, and Walker. A look at the 1840 census for these counties shows a range from 120,172 bushels of corn harvested in Paulding County to 469,364 bushels for Cass County. Compare this to 1,494,460 bushels harvested in Crawford County which is located south of the Cherokee country. The range of

[79] Donald L. Kemmerer, "The Pre-Civil War South's Leading Crop, Corn," *Agricultural History* 23 (Oct., 1949): 236-239.
[80] *Compendium of the Sixth Census: 1840* (Washington, D. C.: Thomas Allen, 1841).

Table 3. Northern and Southern Crop Production in 1839, 1849, and 1859

Region and crop	1839 Bushels or Bales Millions	1839 Value in Millions	1849 Bushels or Bales Millions	1849 Value in Millions	1859 Bushels or Bales Millions	1859 Value in Millions
Northern Corn	182.3	$94.8	243.0	$136.1	401.7	$293.2
Southern Corn	195.2	100.5	349.3	199.6	437.0	319.0
Southern Cotton	1.65	52.2	2.46	106.6	5.39	232.8
U.S. Wheat, Rye, Oats Barley, & Buckwheat			275.4		400.2	
Top 4 Cotton States: Corn			97.6	54.6	110.0	80.3
6 Border States: Corn			161.4	90.4	244.5	178.5

Table 3 compares the growth of the cotton and corn industries in the South and the North from 1839 to 1859. In 1839, one year after the removal of most Cherokees from east of the Mississippi River, corn production, measured in bushels and bales, far outweighed cotton production, while the dollar value of the cotton crop was only half that of corn. Throughout the period, corn remained the South's primary agricultural product. This table is based on Donald L. Kemmerer's "Table 1" in "The Pre-Civil War South's Leading Crop, Corn," *Agricultural History* 23 (Oct., 1949): 236-39. Kemmerer lists the following sources for his table: Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington, 1933), 2:1027, 1039; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 Abstract* (Washington, 1853), 88-89; and *Eight Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture of the United States in 1860* (Washington, 1864), 3:xlvii, xciv.

figures for cotton for the former Cherokee counties is zero pounds recorded for Union County to 326,403 pounds for Cass County. Compare this to over 13 million pounds of cotton for Hancock County. Cobb is the only county in former Cherokee Georgia that listed a cotton manufactory, an industry that produced finished products from cotton. This is compared to a total of 19 state-wide.[81]

The two largest counties carved from the 1819 to 1838 boundaries of the Cherokee nation in Alabama were Cherokee and De Kalb. Cherokee County produced 318,365 bushels of Indian corn while DeKalb reported 313,591. The Indian corn production was below the average of 653,255 for northern Alabama counties but slightly above the average of 307,552 for southern counties. Limestone County, which lies along the Tennessee River and was created from treaties negotiated by Jackson in the 1810s, produced 980,240 bushels of Indian corn. Cherokee County reported 1,383,633 pounds of cotton while De Kalb only produced 94,723. DeKalb's cotton production was the lowest reported of all the north Alabama counties. Only one county in South Alabama, Covington, reported a lower count at 30,305. These figures should be compared to leading cotton producing counties in Alabama such as Montgomery, which produced nearly 15 million pounds of cotton, Perry which produced over 12 million pounds, and Franklin and Madison which produced over 10 million pounds each. Limestone County reported 5,772,948 pounds of cotton produced. The average county production for all 49 counties in Alabama was 2,390,588 pounds of cotton. No cotton manufactories were listed in Cherokee, DeKalb, or Limestone for 1840, while 12 were listed for the entire state.[82]

---

[81] *Compendium of the Sixth Census: 1840.*
[82] *Compendium of the Sixth Census: 1840.*

The three largest Tennessee counties created from the final cession of land in 1835 were Bradley, Hamilton, and Polk. (See Figure 9.) Bushels of corn produced in 1840 in each of these counties were 420,968, 282,275, and 220,224, respectively. This is compared to a range of 33,423 bushels to 717,617 bushels in the counties of East Tennessee. Rutherford County, in Middle Tennessee, was the largest producer of corn at 3,301,000 bushels. Rutherford also had the largest production of cotton in Middle Tennessee at 2,620,000 pounds. Three counties in West Tennessee produced over three million pounds of cotton. Compare this to 21,669 pounds of cotton for Bradley County, 13,755 pounds for Hamilton, and 14,883 pounds for Polk. Franklin County in Middle Tennessee listed 9 cotton manufactories, while Bradley, Hamilton, and Polk listed none.[83]

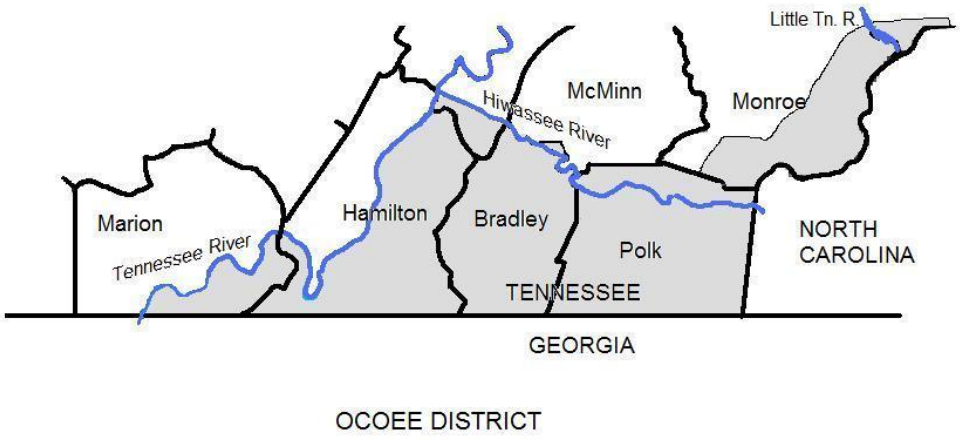

Figure 9. 1836 Survey Districts and Their Relation to Tennessee Counties. Based on a drawing by C. W. Hoff, 1935 in Shirley Coats Hoskins, ed., *Cherokee Property Valuations in Tennessee: 1836* (N.p.: Shirley Coats Hoskins, 1984), n. pag.

[83] *Compendium of the Sixth Census: 1840.*

The 1850 Census

The number of bushels of corn produced in Cherokee County, North Carolina in 1850 was 204,837 and in Macon County, it was 225,397 bushels. Compare this to 39,875 in Union County, which reported the lowest number, 884,286 in Guilford, and almost 28 million for the entire state. Cherokee and Macon counties reported no 400-pound bales of cotton ginned in 1850 compared to 78,845 state-wide.[84]

The number of bushels of corn produced in the eleven former Cherokee counties of Georgia ranged from 214,193 for Gilmer County to 497,769 bushels for Cass. This compares to a maximum of 687,205 bushels in Troup County and a low figure of 17,350 for Clinch County, both of which were located outside Cherokee country. The number of 400-pound cotton bales produced in the eleven Cherokee counties ranged from a low of zero for Gilmer and Union Counties and 14 for Lumpkin County to 2,401 bales for Cobb. Compare this to over 19,000 bales each in Burke, Houston, and Stewart Counties.[85]

Cherokee and DeKalb counties in Alabama listed 546,986 and 363,225 bushels of Indian corn, respectively. Limestone County listed 861,664. Five counties outside of the former nation, Dallas, Greene, Madison, Marengo, and Montgomery, produced over one million bushels each. Cherokee County reported 2,717 400-pound bales of cotton produced while DeKalb reported only 260. Only three counties, Blount, Hancock, and Mobile, reported fewer bales produced than DeKalb. By comparison, Limestone County reported 14,809 bales. Tuscaloosa County, located on the fall line, reported the greatest number of cotton bales at 73,561.[86]

---

[84] *Seventh Census, 1850,* 319-22.
[85] *Seventh Census, 1850,* 378-81.
[86] *Seventh Census, 1850,* 430-31.

Indian corn production in Bradley, Hamilton, and Polk Counties in Tennessee in 1850 was 574,698, 520,542, and 299,917 bushels, respectively. Fourteen counties in Tennessee produced over one million bushels of corn. Bradley County reported 1,600 400-pound bales of cotton, Hamilton reported 2, and Polk listed 29. Compare this to Fayette County which produced the maximum number of bales at 28,302. Twenty-five counties in Tennessee failed to record any bales of cotton. Many of those counties, such as Sevier, Rhea, Washington, Greene, Anderson, Jefferson, Knox, McMinn, Macon, Meigs, and Monroe, lie in the eastern section of Tennessee which historically has not been a large producer of cotton and which has been shown to have a lower slave population than middle or west Tennessee in the years before the Civil War.[87]

Conclusion

As the surveys and spoliation claims for the Cherokee Nation and the U. S. Census records for the southern states show, the dominant crop grown in Cherokee country both before and after removal was corn. Donald L. Kemmerer's research demonstrates that corn production surpassed cotton production throughout the entire pre-Civil War South. In light of these statistics, it is reasonable to question whether cotton agriculture was a dominant factor in Cherokee removal.

No doubt the spread of cotton agriculture in the South after 1800 encouraged many immigrants into the region. But how many arrived with dreams of establishing large slave-labor cotton plantations is impossible to know. Data confirms that many of the new immigrants into former Creek and Chickasaw lands were able to establish new cotton plantations. And some

[87] *Seventh Census, 1850,* 586-88.

lucky emigrants into Cherokee country were able to win or purchase cotton plantations in Georgia and Alabama that had belonged to wealthy planters like Major Ridge, Joseph Vann, or John Ross. Most whites, however, found unimproved land or modest farms, like the one acquired by the Brandon family in North Georgia. They moved into Cherokee lands in the 1830s after Mr. Brandon's mercantile business failed. Hoping to change his fortune, Brandon bought thirteen lottery tickets but did not win. When some of the lottery winners put their Cherokee lands on the market, Brandon bought some land in Cass County on the Etowah River. The Brandons moved there in 1835, evicting Cherokees that they found living in their house. They lived among both white and Cherokee families who had not yet been evicted from their lands. Their first year in Cass challenged the family which suffered from disease. They complained of holes in the floor that allowed cold air to filter in. The following spring they sowed crops and built granaries. It is not clear what grain crop they planted, but there is no mention of cotton.[88]

Eyewitness reports of visitors to former Cherokee country confirm that many whites engaged in agricultural and commercial practices that were established by the former tenants. For example, on a visit to the area in 1848, Charles Lanman reported that "the principal revenue of the people . . . is derived from the business of raising cattle, which is practiced to a considerable extent. The mountain ranges afford an abundance of the sweetest grazing food, and all that the farmer has to do in the autumn is to hunt up his stock, which has now become excessively fat, and drive them to the Charleston or Baltimore market." East Tennessee farmers drove thousands of heads of hogs and cattle annually through the mountains to North Carolina or sent them down the Tennessee River to markets in the Lower South. In 1849-50, *Debow's Review* estimated that

[88] Zillah Hayne Brandon Memoir, 1830-1838, in Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 85-91.

81,000 hogs were driven to eastern markets from East Tennessee and Kentucky. Charles Lanman's journal describes an area of rich valleys filled with small farms too small to be described as plantations. The principal crops in the region were corn, wheat, rye, and potatoes. North Georgians supplemented their food supply through fishing and hunting. [89]

New immigrants into the region also benefitted from the extensive fruit orchards planted by the Cherokees. In particular, the Cherokees' success in growing apples had a lasting impact on the region. Two apples developed by the Cherokees, the Nantahalee and the Junaluska, became the subject of poems by Francis Orray Ticknor. Jarvis Van Buren, who left New York for Habersham County, Georgia in the early 1830s, established one of the first apple nurseries in the lower South. He collected southern apple seedlings from the old Cherokee orchards of North Georgia, the upper Piedmont, and the mountainous backcountry of neighboring states. By 1850, he had developed a thriving apple industry centered around Habersham and Hall counties. [90]

Finally, the Cherokee lands were not well-suited to large-scale cotton production. The climate and soil in the region were more conducive to corn and other crops. While cotton agriculture did play a role in the acquisition of Cherokee lands in North Alabama and Middle Tennessee in the early 1800s, its role was marginal in the final cession of lands described in the 1835 treaty. New immigrants into the former Cherokee Nation found a beautiful, rich land of fruit trees, modest corn and wheat subsistence farms, saw and grist mills, ferries and taverns, saltpeter works, and hog, cattle, and sheep grazing lands. Corn, which sustained Southeastern Indian life for 800 years, remained the most valuable crop in Cherokee country.

---

[89] McKenzie, *One South or Many*, 38; Bonner, *A History of Georgia Agriculture*, 45.
[90] Bonner, *A History of Georgia,* 155-58.

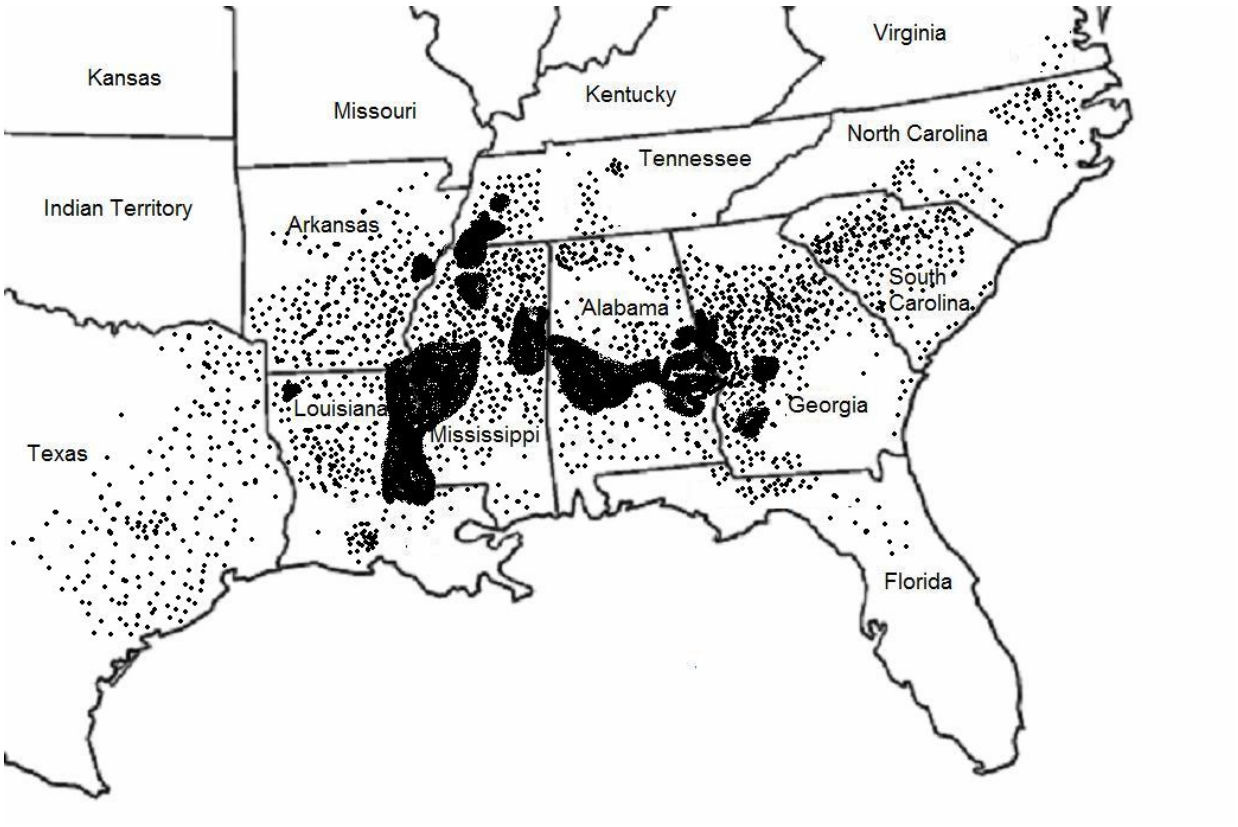

Figure 10. The Cotton Belt in 1859. This map demonstrates that cotton production remained limited in the former Cherokee lands of the southern-most Appalachians as late as 1859. The climate and soils of the physiographic provinces that comprised much of north Georgia, southwest North Carolina, East Tennessee, and northeast Alabama were not conducive to cotton production. Based on a map in Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 16. Wright's map was adapted from United States Department of Agriculture, *Atlas of Agriculture*, Part V, Advance Sheets (December 15, 1915).

Chapter II

Fruits of the Forest: The Timber and Medicinal Herbs Industries

Introduction

In May 1775, after having spent two years traveling through Creek and Seminole lands in Georgia and Florida, botanist William Bartram set out for the Cherokee town of Keowe in South Carolina. As he traveled by horseback through the Allegheny Mountains of South Carolina, he recorded the flora, fauna, people, weather, topography, and mineral formations that he encountered. After leaving Fort Prince George, he described the scenery: "I approached a charming vale, amidst sublimely high forests, awful shades! Darkness gathers around; far distant thunder rolls over the trembling hills: the black clouds with august majesty and power, move slowly forwards, shading regions of towering hills, and threatening all the destruction of a thunder storm . . . ."[91]

Bartram made extensive notes of all the trees and plants that he observed: *magnolia auriculata, acer striatum, rhododendron ferrugineum, quercus rubra, kalmia latifolia, quercus alba, azalea flammula*, and many more. Although Bartram appreciated the diversity of flora, the beauty of the hills and vales, and the majesty of the powerful mountain thunderstorms, what he could not appreciate was that the thunderstorms that he admired were one of the crucial elements in creating the environment that spawned such diversity. With the exception of the Pacific Northwest, the Great Smoky Mountains and surrounding peaks comprise the wettest area in the United States. High humidity in the summers creates excellent growing conditions for many

[91] William Bartram, *Travels and Other Writings: Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (New York: The Library of America, 1996), 281.

types of flora while winter snows assist in disseminating nutrients deep into the already rich, loamy soil. Because of the great variation of flora and fauna, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has been designated an International Biosphere Reserve. The study of botany and other natural sciences was still in its infancy when Bartram and other eighteenth and nineteenth-century visitors made their way into Cherokee country, but they could still appreciate the vast natural plant and timber resources that the virgin forests offered.[92]

Timber

In the Blue Ridge physiographic province of western North Carolina, east Tennessee, and part of north Georgia, chestnut, oak, maple, birch, and beech were found at the lower and middle elevations with conifer forests of spruce and fir dominating the highest elevations. Grassy and peat balds were also found at the high elevations. The balds provided a habitat for berries which were consumed by Cherokees, wildlife, and livestock. The variability in climate and soils of the other physiographic provinces that served as home to the Cherokees further enhanced the diversity of vegetation and natural resources available for use by humans. Vast forests of poplar, chestnut, and chestnut oak stretched across middle and west Tennessee, part of North Alabama, and Kentucky. Chestnuts provided a source for tanbark, rot-resistant lumber, and nuts for human and livestock consumption. Oak-pine forests dominated the Piedmont Plateau provinces in Georgia and Alabama and provided sources of wood for construction and firewood.[93]

---

[92] Bartram, *Travels and Other Writings,* 269, 273, 275, 281, 295.
[93] Fenneman, *Physiography*, 169; Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 1:43-45.

The Cherokees lived in this region of diverse ecological environments for many centuries before the white man came. They believed that the trees, bushes, and plants contained magical powers that varied from one type of plant to the next. They carefully studied how to use these powerful properties in medicine, construction, hunting, agriculture, purification rituals, and every aspect of daily life. Every type of plant material had a specific use. For example, every part of a tree was used to fill some aspect of subsistence living or spiritual purpose.

Wood was the staple product for Cherokees in providing the tools of everyday existence. Cherokees in western North Carolina preferred wood from the tulip poplar tree for log cabin and dugout canoe construction. Although the manufacture and use of dugout canoes is often associated with the romantic interpretation of Native American culture, their use was not restricted to North American indigenous populations. African-Americans and Euro-Americans used dugout canoes of their own design and production. The forests also provided Cherokees with abundant raw materials for bows which were made by stringing twisted squirrel skin or bear gut between the ends of a curved-arc piece of locust stave. Cherokees used river cane for making baskets, as winter forage for cattle, and for the shafts of arrows. Cane was also the preferred material in the manufacture of blowguns, which were still in common use at the time of removal. Cherokees of all ages and of both sexes were expert blowgun hunters and used the tool to hunt a variety of small game including rabbits, squirrels, and birds. Buckeyes and the roots of a plant that they called "devil's shoestring" were tossed into the water to stun fish as were the roots and hulls of black walnuts.[94]

[94] Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 1:45, 244-46; Payne-Butrick, 2:454n46.

The Cherokees made maple syrup, potash, pitch, tar, and turpentine from trees long before the federal civilization program was begun. They also made lye by leaching wood ashes and, in turn, used the lye to create soap. The Cherokees sometimes added the pounded root of a plant that they called *Se-li-qoi-yi*, probably the yucca plant, to the lye which caused it to foam, then used this mixture for washing clothes.[95]

The Cherokees and other Native American groups burned their woods to promote grasses for deer and cattle to graze on and to make hunting easier by clearing out the bushy undergrowth. In 1825, the Cherokee General Council passed a law declaring that anyone who set the woods on fire before March 1 would pay a fine of five dollars. It is not clear what problem this law was trying to solve or the significance of the date. They may have feared that fires could get out of control before the spring rains. The law may also have been tied to the fact that Cherokee men left the villages in winter and dispersed to the woods to hunt game. Cherokee women and children also roamed the woods in winter to find nuts. Forest fires created dangers for the people hunting and gathering in the woods and the smoke would interfere with visibility. The hunting season traditionally ceased with the arrival of the first new moon of spring which was either early March or April. The Payne-Butrick papers, collected in the 1830s by missionary Rev. Daniel S. Butrick and *Home Sweet Home* composer John Howard Payne, reveal that older and younger generations of Cherokees disagreed on whether the first new moon of spring occurred in March or April. Younger men believed that the March new moon signaled the arrival of spring, while the older men, who believed that spring should not be celebrated until after grass began to

[95] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 293; Payne-Butrick, 2:96; 2:464n128.

grow, insisted on April. The law, therefore, may have been passed to settle the dispute concerning the end of hunting season and when it was safe to burn. People of European ancestry who moved into Cherokee country adopted the Indian practice of setting the forest on fire. As for the Cherokees, this practice promoted the growth of grasses for their livestock and aided tree growth by reducing competition from weeds and seedling trees.[96]

When whites moved into Cherokee country, they had an immediate demand for timber to build cabins, corncribs, and fences. Milling was often the first industry to develop after farming and husbandry, creating a demand for gristmills and sawmills. Depending on the distance to the nearest sawmill, which was often located far outside of Cherokee Country, new white settlers would fell the trees themselves to build their log cabins, outbuildings, mills, and the raceways which diverted water from streams to power the large waterwheels at the gristmills. Because of the need for timber, sawmills were usually set up within months or a few years after settlers began to move into a region. The development of the Brainerd Mission milling operations at Chickamauga, (present-day Chattanooga, Tennessee), is one example of this pattern which was repeated in other communities as whites moved in.

The missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) arrived at Chickamauga in 1817 and immediately began plans to build a thriving mission that included a gristmill, sawmill, and blacksmith shop. The sawmill fulfilled several purposes: it supplied lumber for buildings for the mission, it served to teach Indian students a skill they needed to become more "civilized," and it became a source of income. The

---

[96] Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 1:45; Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 41; Payne-Butrick, 1:263-65; Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies*: *From Natural Habitat to National Park* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 14.

missionaries moved into the house owned by John McDonald, grandfather of future Principal Chief of the Cherokees, John Ross. Only two weeks after arrival, missionary Cyrus Kingsbury had begun efforts to locate a millstone for use at their future mill. The mill was constructed and placed into operation within six months. The missionaries sold this first mill in 1820 and devised plans to build a canal to power a new gristmill, sawmill, and blacksmith shop. Workers employed by the missionaries used a pair of oxen, raised at the mission, to haul timber to build the sawmill. The use of working oxen was rare among both whites and Indians living in that part of the country, but the oxen enabled the quick construction of the sawmill in only six months. The sawmill began operations in November 1820 and the blacksmith shop opened in 1821. Most of their lumber was used on or near the mission, but within a few months they loaded a boat with about 7000 board feet produced at their sawmill and shipped it to be sold at the mission and Indian settlement at Creek Path, Alabama.[97]

Skilled craftsmen including carpenters, blacksmiths, and millers — whether white or native — were hard to find in Cherokee country despite the fact that the federal civilization program had been in effect for over twenty years. As a result, the Brainerd missionaries, like many of their wealthy Cherokee neighbors, hired whites who lived outside Cherokee country to move to the vicinity of the mission to operate their mills and smith shop. In the 1790s, after the federal civilization program was founded, the Cherokees began granting permission for white experts to enter their country and begin mining and milling operations. The Cherokee agent would then issue a passport. A Cherokee law passed by the General Council on October 26,

[97] Phillips, *Brainerd Journal*, 27, 29, 63, 149, 166-67, 197.

1819, formalized this process by allowing blacksmiths, millers, ferrymen, and turnpike-keepers to obtain a permit and enter the nation with their families. The law also entitled them to farm up to twelve acres of land for their personal use. Subsequent measures further opened the nation to skilled whites: a law passed November 12, 1824 allowed mechanics to enter the Nation for five years and a resolution dated November 8, 1828 authorized the Treasurer of the Nation to issue permits to Cherokee citizens that allowed them to recruit non-citizens as mechanics. The Cherokees used the term "mechanic" to cover a broad swath of craftsmen including saw and gristmill operators, carpenters, miners, blacksmiths, ferrymen, schoolmasters, and turnpike-keepers.[98]

On October 15, 1829, after the influx of gold diggers into their country, the National Committee and Council temporarily suspended the Treasurer's authority to issue permits for mechanics to enter the country. The flood of white men into the mountains made it difficult to determine who was there legitimately and who was not. Permits were being obtained under fraudulent circumstances for persons who were not skilled mechanics. The General Council suspended the issuing of permits temporarily until the matter could be studied. Six days later, on the 21st, the Council declared a resolution to the problem by enacting a law limiting permits to one year. The Council expressed its concern over skilled white craftsmen using their work in the Cherokee Nation as a means to becoming permanent residents by declaring that they could not bring their families. An exception was made for millers, ferrymen, blacksmiths, and turnpike-keepers that had already entered the country with their families under the 1819 law. Anyone

[98] Phillips, *Brainerd Journal*, 29, 211; Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 130, 133, 134.

caught obtaining a permit through fraud or caught bringing unlicensed workers into the Nation was subject to fines of between twenty-five and fifty dollars.[99]

In spite of such restrictions placed on importing skilled workmen from outside the Nation to develop the Nation's wood-based industries, the number of sawmills increased significantly from the time of the Davis-Meigs 1809 census to the time of removal. In 1809, only three sawmills could be found in the Cherokee Nation. By the time of the 1824 census, this number had increased to a known thirteen sawmills. During the 1830s, seven gristmills and associated sawmills belonging to Anglo-Cherokee households in the southwest corner of North Carolina were inventoried in preparation for removal. Most of these were small tub mills that used one set of stones and had water conveyed to them by means of a dam and long trough. Values from $50 to $355 were assigned depending on the size and condition of the mill. For example, Thomas Raper's sawmill, which used the same type of gear system as his gristmill and which was in bad repair, was valued at $150. John Love's small tub mill with one set of stones and a low roof was valued at $100 while Gideon Morris's new mill received a value of $355. Ownership of saw and gristmills by mixed families was common. In 1818, assistant chief Charles Hicks noted this fact when he wrote that "there are six grist and two sawmills owned by natives, and fourteen or fifteen grist and two sawmills owned by white men who are married into native families" in the Nation.[100]

This model for developing mills and blacksmith shops was also used in all-white communities. One typical example is the growth of the milling and lumber business in Blount

[99] Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 130, 133, 134-35.
[100] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 168-69; Legislature of Cherokee Nation, "Census of 1824," *Cherokee Phoenix*, June 18, 1828; Riggs, "Removal Period Cherokee Households," 1:139-40.

County, Tennessee. Blount was created from lands ceded by the Cherokees in three treaties: the Treaty of Holston in 1791, the first Treaty of Tellico in 1798, and the Calhoun Treaty of 1819. The first gristmill was established sometime before 1788 while the land still belonged to the Cherokees. Court records indicate that in 1795 three residents registered bills of sale and marks of ownership for mills and that same year the court issued permits for the operation of several more gristmills. The county obtained its first sawmill in 1796 and boasted at least four sawmills by 1802. Hugh Kelso established both a saw and gristmill in the vicinity of Morganton before the town was officially established in 1813. Gristmills, often paired with sawmills, continued to proliferate in large numbers throughout the first fifty years of the county.[101]

Alexander Kennedy, the owner of the first sawmill in Blount County, shipped lumber down the Little River to market. Kennedy's and the other sawmills became increasingly important to the local economy as the demand grew for lumber for construction and cabinet work. By 1833, Blount County had four cabinet makers registered for operations. C. E. Aaron and his son operated a combined sawmill-furniture shop on Montvale Road. Lumber was also needed in the wheelwright and wagonsmith industries of Blount County. The 1820 U.S. census recorded two wheelwrights and fifty-two wagonsmiths working in twenty-seven establishments. Having access to an abundant supply of timber resources was crucial to the development of a variety of businesses in the community.[102]

This pattern of industrial development was similar in Cades Cove, a much smaller community now located in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Because it was an

---

[101] Inez Burns, *History of Blount County Tennessee: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955* (Maryville, TN: Mary Blount Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution and the Tennessee Historical Commission, 1957), 33, 39, 217-219, 229, 255.
[102] Inez Burns, *History of Blount County,* 229-31, 248.

isolated community surrounded by mountains and with limited access by road over steep mountains, the development of the Cades Cove timber industry was slower than in neighboring Blount County. In 1818, John and Lucretia Oliver became the first white settlers to move into Cades Cove as part of a land speculation scheme before the land was officially ceded by the Cherokees in 1819. Several small tub mills for processing corn were built in the cove by the end of the 1830s, but they were not large enough to be recorded in the 1840 census. Change began in the 1840s when Frederick Shields built a large overshot wheel mill that eventually replaced the smaller tub mills. The larger mill took over the processing of wheat, which previously had been transported to Tuckaleechee Cove for milling. By 1857, Cades Cove had acquired another large gristmill and two sawmills. The sawmills provided lumber for the local area, but it was not until the Little River Lumber Company began operations in 1901 and branches of the railroad reached the edge of the cove, that the area's timber industry began servicing a larger market.[103]

The country's earliest sawmills were built on the coasts, beginning in New England and Maine, then later in the South to Georgia and along the Gulf Coast. Timber was often floated hundreds of miles on major river systems to coastal markets. In the early nineteenth century, Francois Andre Michaux described how white pine was cut near the headwaters of the Allegheny River, floated 150 to 180 miles to the Ohio River, and then floated down the Mississippi to market in New Orleans, a total distance of 2,900 miles. On the Mississippi River in Louisiana, lumbermen girdled cypress trees which caused them to die and dry out slowly. Months or years later, they were felled during the dry season and left where they lay until the area was flooded. When the logs were lifted off the ground by rising waters, men gathered them into crude rafts

[103] Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988) 79, 270n46.

and floated them to mills downstream. Occasionally, flatboats were used to float timber downstream. The entire process, which could take months or even years from the beginning of the girdling phase to arrival at the sawmill, was widely used during the nineteenth century. It was not until about 1880, after railroad technology advanced to the point where engines could haul very heavy loads up steeper inclines, that the lumber industry's dependence on river transportation started to decline.[104]

One of the obstacles to transporting timber long distances from the Cherokee Nation was the size of the rivers. A thriving lumber industry developed on the Mississippi because it was wide enough for rivermen to be able to float large rafts of timber without endangering steamboats which plied the same waters. Most of the Cherokee lands, especially those defined by the 1819 treaty, lay on the headwaters of smaller rivers which often became very low during summer droughts. Timber located on the northern boundary of the Cherokee Nation on the Tennessee River was difficult to cut and float downstream because of the serious impediments that lay between Ross's Landing and the Ohio River, in particular the Muscle Shoals and the whirlpools just downstream of Ross's Landing. Not to be deterred by the problems associated with floating large amounts of timber down the Tennessee and smaller rivers originating in the Cherokee mountains, early pioneers adopted the practice of building keel and flatboats, loading them with goods like whiskey and bars of iron, floating them downstream to New Orleans or towns on the fall line, then breaking up the boats and selling the wood for lumber. Because many boats which transported goods downstream never returned to their point of origin, several towns

[104] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, 473-74, 527.

along the Tennessee and its upper tributaries developed thriving boat-building industries, including Kingsport, Knoxville, and Southwest Point (present-day Kingston, Tennessee).[105]

Aided by the adoption of the steam engine and the development of new international markets for its products, the southern timber industry grew in the early nineteenth century and led the country for several decades in timber exports compared to population. Large quantities of hickory hoops, for example, were shipped to the West Indies and used to make barrels and casks. White oak staves were exported to the West Indies and England from all eastern and southern ports in the United States and long-leaved pine was shipped to the West Indies from Wilmington, North Carolina and Savannah, Georgia to be used to construct vessels and houses. Georgia pitch pine was sent to England, primarily the port of Liverpool, to be used in the shipbuilding industry, and North Carolina exported turpentine. The growth in the lumber industry was confined primarily to the coast, unlike in the North, where the industry grew more rapidly in the interior. In 1820, for example, Louisiana had eight sawmills, six of which were located near New Orleans. The other two were located at Natchez, which was then part of the Louisiana Territory. The railroad first opened up the interior regions of Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to large-scale operations and only later did the railroad open up the interior of the South to major timber companies.[106]

The first efforts to build railroads in the South began in the 1830s with the construction of the Charleston to Hamburg and Georgia Railroads. (Railroad construction and its relation to

---

[105] John Hebron Moore, *Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1967), 74; Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 194-95; Samuel Riley to Return J. Meigs, 6 February, 1814, *Records of the Cherokee Agency in Tennessee, 1801-1835*, M-208, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Reel 6.

[106] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, 474, 529-30; Moore, *Andrew Brown*, 13, 17-18.

Cherokee removal will be discussed at length in a later chapter on transportation.) Although southern railroad construction did not begin in earnest until the early 1850s because of the lingering effects of the panic of 1837 and slow developments in railroad technology, whites were taking stock of the timber available in the Cherokee Nation and surrounding areas through which rail lines were being planned. It was readily apparent that there was no shortage of timber for construction of the railroads through Cherokee country. For example, in January 1835, the *Miners Recorder and Spy in the West*, a pro-internal improvements paper published in Auraria, Georgia in the heart of the gold region, published J. Edgar Thomson's report on the first survey of the Georgia Railroad. Thomson, the chief engineer, reported the completion of his survey of the route that the railroad would take between Augusta and Athens. This 112-mile stretch was just one of many segments of railroad that would eventually connect with other railway sections headed west that would comprise the Charleston to Memphis railway that was planned to run through Cherokee territory. Among Thomson's concerns was the durability of the rails since several earlier northern railroads had suffered from a lack of quality rails. Many rails were constructed solely of wood, without using iron as the top rail that came into direct contact with the engine and car wheels. Based on the experience of northern railroads, Thomson recommended the use of longitudinal rails of heart pine, supported by cross ties of white oak or other durable timber placed four feet apart. Heart pine and white oak were available locally. He also recommended that the top rail be made from iron bar that was 2 ¼ by 5/8 inches in size. Most of the construction of the railroads, including felling and hauling of trees, would eventually be done by gangs of slaves hired out for the work by their owners. Over the next several decades, thousands of acres of trees would be cut as the spider web of railroad connections grew across

the South. The railroad and timber industries became dependent on each other as railroads made it easier to access remote sections of virgin forest and trees were harvested along railroad routes.[107]

The southern lumber industry expanded during the 1840s and 1850s, due in part to the use of the railroad to reach areas which had been considered too difficult to harvest. When a new rail line reached virgin forest the event was newsworthy because it was another sign of progress. An example can be seen in the August 1853 Selma, Alabama *Sentinel* when it announced that a load of pine spars had been transported from Bibb and Shelby counties in the center of the state by the Alabama and Tennessee Railroad. The newspaper estimated that the cost of transporting a load of timber from central Alabama to Mobile had been reduced to $10 per tree, and that each tree would sell for the remarkable amount of $100.[108]

An accurate assessment of the extent and growth of the timber industry in the South in the first half of the nineteenth century is impossible, because of the lack of records. While the U.S. censuses of 1810, 1820, and 1840 included a few figures on the lumber industry and the number of sawmills, data for many areas is missing. No manufactures census was conducted in 1830 because of problems with the 1810 and 1820 manufactures censuses. Nevertheless, if we keep in mind that the figures that were reported must be approached with caution, the census records can provide some insight into the importance of the timber industry in the South in the first four decades of the nineteenth century as compared to other regions.[109]

---

[107] Report of J. Edgar Thomson, Chief Engineer to James Cemak, President of the Georgia Railroad, printed in *The Miners Recorder and Spy in the West*, 17 Jan 1835.
[108] Moore, *Andrew Brown*, vii, 73.
[109] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, 476-89.

The 1810 federal census shows only one sawmill reported in the state of Georgia, with sixty-five reported for South Carolina. The Territory of Orleans (located below the thirty-third parallel at what is now the northern border of the state of Louisiana) reported thirty-four sawmills in seven counties, while the Territory of Louisiana (above the thirty-third parallel) reported nine sawmills. Pennsylvania reported 2,016 sawmills, Massachusetts reported 150, Maryland, 113, Virginia 112, and Rhode Island 28. Figures for North Carolina, Tennessee, Connecticut, New York, and New Hampshire are missing.[110]

In the 1820 census, the number of sawmills was not recorded by every county; instead, several counties recorded other types of equipment involved in the lumber industry or reported only the value of lumber produced. Brunswick, the only county in North Carolina that reported lumber production, recorded 16 people employed in producing lumber with a market value of $4,500. The counties of Pulaski, Jackson, Liberty, Telfair, Morgan, Jones, Chatham, and Columbia in Georgia reported a total of 81 people employed in making approximately $22,000 in timber products. Unfortunately, several of these counties did not record the value of their production or the number of people employed in the industry, making these figures very incomplete. The counties of Monroe and Lawrence in Alabama reported 10 sawmills and 29 people employed to make $20,890 in lumber. The counties of Carter, Hawkins, Jefferson, and Sevier in East Tennessee reported 13 sawmills, 31 employees, and $24,130 in production. In West Tennessee, the counties of Dickson, Lawrence, Rutherford, Smith, and Williamson reported 5 sawmills, 23 employees, and over $5,000 in products. The figures for both East and West Tennessee are obviously incomplete with several counties failing to report in each

[110] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, 476-77.

category. By contrast, New York reported 388 employees, 182 sawmills, and $263,544 in lumber production. Even from these incomplete figures, it is clear that the South lagged behind in lumber production in 1820.[111]

Throughout the nineteenth century, the value of lumber produced grew exponentially across the nation. As in other southern areas, the greatest percentage increases in states containing former Cherokee lands occurred in the decade between the 1840 and 1850 censuses. In 1840, Alabama reported that the value of timber products produced that year was $169,008. Georgia reported $114,050, North Carolina reported $506,766, and Tennessee reported $217,606 in timber products. The combined total of the four states was $1,007,430. In 1850, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee reported $1,103,481, $923,403, $985,075, and $725,387 in timber products, respectively, for a total of $3,737,346 or a 271% increase. This was due in part to the increased use of steam engines in the lumber industry but also due to a demand for timber in railroad construction. With the exception of Alabama, which reported a slight decrease in timber production from 1860 to 1870, timber production and the value of timber products increased steadily through the end of the century. The next greatest increases in percentages occurred between 1880 and 1890, about the time railroads began to be used to haul timber from remote locations in the mountains to market. This was due in part to the invention of the geared locomotive in 1877 which permitted increased tractive ability of the engines on sharp curves, steep grades, and irregular tracks. In 1880, Alabama reported that the value of timber products produced that year was $2,649,634. Georgia reported $4,875,310, North Carolina reported $2,672,796, and Tennessee reported $3,744,905 in timber products. The combined total of the

[111] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, 477-88.

four states was $13,942,645. In 1890, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee reported $8,507,971, $6,545,195, $5,898,742, and $9,073,686 in timber products, respectively, for a total of $30,025,594 or a 115% increase. [112]

As Euro-Americans moved into Cherokee lands, they found many other uses for the abundant and diverse timber resources of the region. Large quantities of wood were required for the production of saltpeter which was used in gunpowder manufacture. For every one hundred pounds of saltpeter produced, eighteen bushels of oak ashes were used in the leaching process. Fewer bushels were required if elm ashes were used. Gristmill operations required large amounts of wood to package flour and meal. Locally-made white oak barrels were used to ship corn meal and wheat flour downriver to market. Whiskey and pork and beef products were also shipped in barrels. Bark was used in large quantities in the tanning industry. The 1810 census indicates that the production of maple sugar was a major industry in East Tennessee, which produced 162,340 pounds of maple sugar worth $16,234, and Kentucky, which produced 2,471,647 pounds valued at $308,932. These figures can be compared to Vermont, whose maple sugar production was 1,200,000 pounds worth $120,000, and Ohio, which reported the greatest maple sugar production with 3,023,806 pounds and $302,380. Virginia, another Southern Appalachian state, ranked third after Ohio and Kentucky and before Vermont, Pennsylvania, and East Tennessee in maple sugar production. The new immigrants into Cherokee country quickly embraced the industry and trade

[112] Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America*, 489, 505; *Compendium of the Sixth Census*, 360-61, 364, 505; Ronald G. Schmidt and William S. Hooks, *Whistle Over the Mountain: Timber, Track, and Trails in the Tennessee Smokies* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Graphicom Press, Inc., 1994), x-xi; Moore, *Andrew Brown*, 31.

of wood products established by their predecessors and ingeniously found more ways to exploit the vast reserves of forests.[113]

Medicinal Herbs

The traditional belief system of the Cherokees holds that disease and death are not natural but are the result of evil forces acting through witches, animal spirits, and ghosts. They believe that the origins of disease lie in the distant past when birds, small animals, and insects held a council to determine how to protect themselves from an increasing population of humans that were encroaching on their territory and were becoming increasingly disrespectful of the animal kingdom and the balance of nature. As a result, the smaller animals and insects created many diseases to visit on man. On learning of the evil designs of the animals, the plants, who were friends of man, determined to help humans by offering their powers as remedies. In this manner, it came to pass that Cherokees began to use numerous woodland plants as herbal medicines.[114]

Many of the plants used in Cherokee medicine are chosen because of their resemblance to the problem that is being treated. For example, biliousness is referred to as a yellow disease because of the color of vomit that often accompanies the disease. To treat the problem, the Cherokee doctor uses a mixture of four different herbs, all chosen because some part of the plant, the flower, root, or stem, is yellow. Goat's rue or devil's shoestring (*tephrosia virginiana*) is named *distai'y*i by the Cherokees which translates as "they [the roots] are tough." Ball players rub it on their limbs after ritual scratching to toughen themselves in preparation for the game.

---

[113] Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 190, 192; Tench Coxe, 1810, 41. The 1810 census report tracks manufactures in East and West Tennessee separately. By 1820, statistics were combined to give a total for the entire state, excluding those lands still owned by Native Americans.
[114] Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas,* 250-52; 319-22.

Women use it to wash their hair to strengthen it and prevent it from falling out or breaking. Milkweed (*euphorbia hypericifolia*) is called *u'ga-atasgi'ski* meaning "the pus oozes out," an obvious reference to the milky white juice in the plant's stems. Milkweed juice is used to treat oozing sores and sore nipples, among other problems.[115]

Like their predecessors the Cherokees, Euro-American settlers in the Southern Appalachians used a variety of native plants as herbal medicines. Black cohosh, or *cimicifuga racemosa*, was gathered in Alabama to treat rheumatism and for female problems. It was also used to stimulate circulation and for various problems associated with nerves and the heart. It was a staple in both folk and professional American medicine from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. The roots have been dug from the wilds of the Southern Appalachian Mountains for generations and could be readily purchased from Shaker communities in the mid-nineteenth century. Senega snakeroot, also called black snakeroot, has been used in Southern Appalachia to treat colds and coughs, sore throats, rheumatism, asthma, dropsy, and pleurisy, and as a stimulant. In the 1730s, a Virginia physician, John Tennent, began using and promoting senega snakeroot in regular medicine after learning that the Seneca Indians used it to treat rattlesnake bites. The popularity of senega as an herbal medicine soon spread and it was widely used in the eastern United States until the early twentieth century. The people of Appalachia also combined native plants with those imported from Europe and Africa to create new folk remedies or "receipts." In a receipt for dropsy dating to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century belonging to a family in Carter County, Tennessee, apple vinegar, chamomile, and wormwood or artemisia, all non-indigenous to North America, are combined with black snakeroot, senega

[115] Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas,* 322-23, 325.

snakeroot, star root, and forty-five iron nails, all found or produced locally (including the iron nails), and baked in an iron oven for several days. The mixture is then strained, a bottle of rum and a pound of sugar added, and simmered another four days.[116]

It is very difficult to demonstrate a direct relationship between the use of herbal medicines by Cherokees and by Euro-Americans or to prove that whites learned the use of particular plants from the Indians. Most early accounts of travelers in Cherokee country discuss the use of native plants and trees from the viewpoint of an observer. No records written by eighteenth or nineteenth-century pioneers give testimony to learning specific skills directly from the Cherokees. Establishing a clearly documented path of acquired skills is also difficult because many plant habitats are widespread across the South or the Alleghenies and plants were often used in the same manner by several indigenous groups. Most whites moving into Cherokee country previously lived in other regions formerly occupied by Indians and they may have acquired uses of specific plants from other tribes before moving into Cherokee country. Another difficulty is the use of oral tradition to pass down the use of herbal medicines and crafts from one Appalachian generation to the next and the inherent problems of possible corruption of tradition. Finally, there is the problem with identification of specific plants. The people of the eastern United States used very colorful names to describe the various plants that they found in the wild. Many plants, like star root, also known as devil's bit or fairy wand, had multiple common names. Some settlers applied names of European origin to North American plants while importing the same plant from England or Europe. Subtle differences among related species also make

---

[116] Crellin, *A Reference Guide to Medicinal Plants*, 165-169, 387-88; Anthony Cavendar, *Folk Medicine in Southern Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 35-36.

identification of specific plants from use of common names difficult. What is known is that both Native Americans and their European successors were creative in their use of indigenous flora to fill their construction, nutrition, and medicinal needs. When people of European descent moved into Cherokee country, they quickly found uses for the native flora. When the Cherokees moved to Indian Territory in present-day Arkansas and Oklahoma and had to leave many native plants behind, they quickly substituted similar plants to fulfill their needs.

One of the most sacred medicinal plants found in the Southern Appalachians is ginseng. Ginseng once grew in the forests of northern China; however, most of these forests were destroyed over a thousand years ago, greatly reducing the natural range of wild ginseng and making it a valuable commodity centuries ago. The Chinese believed that ginseng increased potency and mental capacity and that roots that were especially wrinkled possessed the ability to transfer longevity to the person who ingested them.[117]

Ginseng was first discovered in North America near Montreal by a French Jesuit priest. Other than the former great forests of northern China, the eastern mountain ranges of North America are the only environment in which wild ginseng can grow. Ginseng requires a deep, rich soil made from leaf litter and a shady, cool environment like that found in the Allegheny Mountains. Ginseng has been widely used in eastern North America for a panoply of conditions since the eighteenth century and is still used today. The Cherokees and other Southeastern Indian groups have used it for both its curative properties and in love medicine. Ethnologist James Mooney reported that Cherokee conjurors used ginseng to treat a number of unspecified diseases.

---

[117] Kristin Johannsen, *Ginseng Dreams: The Secret World of America's Most Valuable Plant* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 7; Meredith Mason Brown, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2008), 213.

The Cherokee name for ginseng was *atali guli*, spelled *otali igvli* today, meaning "it climbs the mountain." Ginseng was one of seven herbs that were used by Cherokee priests in the Cementation Festival, also referred to as the Physic Dance, held annually following the Great New Moon Festival. The Cementation Festival gave the men of the community an opportunity to show their loyalty to each other and to bond through a purification ritual. In addition to ginseng, white pine, evergreen briar, cedar, hemlock, heartleaf, and mistletoe, all evergreen plants except for ginseng, were used with the leaves and needles of the other plants in the purification ritual. As several of these plants became scarce, other plants became increasingly used in their stead, including willow roots, swamp dogwood roots, spruce pine, mountain birch bark, and perfume wood or *A-ta-sv-ki* bark.[118]

When William Bartram ventured into Cherokee country in 1775, he spotted the valuable ginseng plant several times. According to Bartram, the plant "appears plentifully on the North exposure of the hill, growing out of the rich mellow humid earth amongst the stones or fragments of rocks." Bartram observed that ginseng had the fragrance and taste of anise seed and he noted that the plant was held "in high estimation with the Indians as well as white inhabitants, and sells at a great price to the Southern Indians of Florida, who dwell near the sea coast where this never grows spontaneously." One afficianado of the plant, William Byrd, helped popularize its use and wrote that it "is of wonderful vertue in many cases, particularly to raise the spirits and promote perspiration, which makes it a specifick in colds and coughs . . . . I carry'd home this

[118] Johannsen, *Ginseng Dreams*, 7; Brown, *Frontiersman,* 213; Payne-Butrick, 1:44-47, 2:468n184; 1:345n87.

Treasure, with as much Joy, as if every root had been the graft of the Tree of Life, and washt and dry'd it carefully."[119]

The plant was a valuable export from the British colonies. By 1770, over thirty-seven tons were shipped annually to China. After the Treaty of Paris was signed, the first American ship to trade with China, the *Empress of China*, sailed from New York with nearly thirty tons of ginseng harvested from the woods of Pennsylvania and western Virginia. The success of the voyage was widely reported in the American press when the ship returned in May 1785. John Jacob Astor began his trading empire in 1786 by buying ginseng root and shipping it to China.[120]

In 1802, another traveler in the Southern Appalachians, Francois Andre Michaux, noted the abundance of ginseng in the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee and made additional observations about its growth habit: "it grows in the declivities of mountains, in fresh and constantly shaded spots, where the soil is richest. A man can scarcely draw in one day more than eight or nine pounds of fresh roots, which are always less than an inch diameter, even after fifteen years of growth . . . ." Michaux further explained that the people of Appalachia commenced collection of ginseng in spring and only stopped at the beginning of winter.[121]

Daniel Boone was just one of many Appalachian pioneers who attempted to tap into the riches of the global market by harvesting ginseng. During the fall and winter of 1787, for example, Boone hired several workers to dig ginseng and he also supplemented his larder by buying the valuable root from others. By the spring of 1788, Boone had accumulated approximately 12 to 15 tons of dried ginseng. He and his son loaded the ginseng onto a keelboat

---

[119] Bartram, 269, 274, 295; Crellin, *A Reference Guide to Medicinal Plants*, 226-28.
[120] Brown, *Frontiersman,* 213; Johannsen, *Ginseng Dreams*, 7, 19-20.
[121] Dunn, *Cades Cove,* 31.

at Maysville, Kentucky and transported it up the Ohio River. Before reaching Pittsburgh, the boat suffered a mishap and was swamped with water. They dried the ginseng on the shore, raised the boat, and continued on the Monongahela River to a landing near Redstone, Pennsylvania where they moved their load to packhorses. The Boones traveled overland to Hagerstown, Maryland, then pushed east to their destination of Philadelphia. On arrival, they learned that the price of ginseng had dropped and Boone lost money on his investment.[122]

William Holland Thomas, an important agent of the Cherokees in western North Carolina, engaged in a large and profitable trade in medicinal herbs collected from the mountains. He also operated a tannery at Quallatown, owned several stores, invested in several sawmills, traded in timber, and speculated in land. Thomas's financial records show that he engaged in the ginseng trade. He built a ginseng house near his Quallatown store where he dried and processed the roots that he bought from the Cherokees who collected it in the mountains. In 1834, Thomas processed over 4,000 pounds of ginseng, most of which was sent to Philadelphia where it was shipped to markets in China. Other merchants in the area, including Bacchus Smith and Nimrod Jarrett, also dealt in the ginseng trade.[123]

"Sangin," as the locals referred to the collection of the ginseng root, became an important source of extra income for whites who lived in the Southern Appalachians and by the twentieth century the practice resulted in the near extinction of ginseng in the region. By 1830, the people of Cades Cove collected ginseng and brought the roots to Knoxville on a daily basis. The residents of the cove found ginseng to be a valuable supplemental source of income in years

[122] Brown, *Frontiersman*, 213-14.
[123] Pierce, *The Great Smokies,* 15-16.

when the chestnut crop — collected by the children of the community in the fall and brought to the Knoxville market — was poor. Ginseng roots, which could be collected eight or nine months of the year, had a longer harvest season than chestnuts. The red berries of ginseng were often collected and buried to encourage new crops of the valuable plants.[124]

In addition to ginseng, William Holland Thomas conducted a large trade in pinkroot (*spigelia marilandia*). Pinkroot, also called Indian pink, was used as a cure for worms and as a cough remedy. One native herbalist mixed an ounce of the root of the plant with a pint of water and prescribed a tablespoon to be taken with an unnamed laxative as needed. A Scottish-trained physician practicing in Charleston, South Carolina, Alexander Garden, is credited with popularizing pinkroot among the English colonists in the 1750s and creating a great demand for it. Demand continued for decades and Thomas was able to take advantage of the market for the root. In an unsigned letter found in Thomas's records, a trader discusses three shipments of pinkroot from 1841 to 1843 to Thomas Barrett of Augusta totaling over two thousand pounds.[125]

U. S. Census records for 1840 show that the total value of ginseng and "all other productions of the forest," which would include pinkroot, totaled $526,580 for the entire United States. New York reported the largest values of wild herbs harvested with $143,332, followed by New Jersey with $65,075, Virginia with $49,654, North Carolina with $46,040, Kentucky with $34,510, and Maine with $32,271. Most of the other states reported income from wild herbs including Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. The figures for these three states, however, are

---

[124] Dunn, *Cades Cove,* 26, 31; Pierce, *The Great Smokies,* 16.
[125] John K. Crellin and Jane Philpott, *A Reference Guide to Medicinal Plants: Herbal Medicine Past and Present*, 339; Pierce, *The Great Smokies,* 15-16; Unsigned, unaddressed letter dated 9 March 1844 from Murphy, North Carolina, William Holland Thomas Collection, MSS 80-3.1, Western Carolina University.

puzzling because they reported only $1,635, $155, and $4,281, respectively in wild herbs. It is known that the Southern Appalachians had a thriving industry in ginseng and wild herbs collection at this time. The collection of herbal plants was a cottage industry, like the collection and sale of chestnuts and many other sources of supplemental income that southerners engaged in. It is possible, therefore, that few records were kept because sales were based on trade for another product or credit in a local store. Figures for ginseng and "all other productions of the forest" do not appear in the 1850 census.[126]

Conclusion

While Euro-Americans made immediate use of the flora and fauna they encountered in Cherokee country, there is no evidence that Euro-Americans were eyeing the vast reserves of timber in the Cherokee Nation for export in large volume to other states or the international market prior to 1838. The technology needed for transport had not yet been developed, and would not be for a number of years. However, interstate and international markets for medicinal herbs and maple syrup from the Cherokee mountains did exist and were seamlessly acquired when whites moved in to newly ceded lands. Euro-Americans were always seeking new business opportunities and had coveted Cherokee lands for decades. By the early nineteenth century, the rich floral diversity of the Cherokee lands was well-known outside the Nation, thanks to a well-established trade in ginseng and other herbs, travelling journalists like Bartram, missionaries, and many other sources. The Cherokees had also indirectly advertised opportunities to develop their timber resources by bragging about the establishment of grist, saw, and powder mills in the

[126] Census, 1840, 361.

Phoenix, in reports to Washington about Cherokee progress, and by bringing in skilled craftsmen to develop their timber-dependent industries. The lands belonging to the Cherokees were attractive to Euro-Americans not just for the opportunity to raise corn, but also for the vast wealth of their floral resources.

The letters and records of rich white male elites dated before removal do not contain direct references to the vast timber resources of the Cherokee Nation nor are they discussed in Congressional debates or newspapers. Conflicts over stands of timber do not appear in military or other records of treaty negotiations and rights to timber do not appear in the texts of treaties. But this does not mean that these resources were not coveted by Euro-Americans. Healthy stands of trees were required for the construction of cabins, barns, corn cribs, gristmills, sawmills, fences, and all the other improvements which white settlers made immediately after moving into Cherokee lands. Like the rich lands coveted by non-elites to grow corn and wheat, the timber and other flora of the Southern Appalachians attracted thousands of whites to Cherokees' lands and contributed to the eventual removal of the tribe.

Chapter III

Saltpeter, Iron, Gold, and other Mineral Riches

Introduction

In July 1830, at the request of Principal Chief John Ross, the General Council held a special meeting to address the latest crisis facing the Cherokee Nation. Ross opened the council with the following remarks: "The constituted authorities of Georgia having assumed the power to exercise sovereign jurisdiction over a large portion of our Territory, and our Political Father, the Chief Magistrate of the United States, having declared that he possesses no power to oppose, or interfere with Georgia in this matter, our relations with the United States are placed in a strange dilemma. The grave aspect of this picture calls for your calm and serious reflections. I have therefore deemed it my incumbent duty, on this extraordinary occasion, to convene the General Council of the Cherokee Nation."[127]

The meeting was held at the Cherokee capitol of New Echota, a short distance from the heart of the Georgia gold mine region. During the six-day meeting, Ross and other leaders discussed recent events in the Cherokee Nation revolving around the influx of thousands of gold seekers who had set up shanty towns and begun primitive gold mining operations. The Cherokees appealed to the federal government to eject the intruders and the United States sent troops to protect Cherokee lands. Georgia Governor George Gilmer responded by declaring that all lands in Cherokee Georgia belonged to the state, including the mines. Jackson quickly put an

[127] John Ross, "Message to the General Council", circa 10 July 1830, in Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 190.

end to the question of federal intervention by declaring that Georgia, not the Cherokees or the United States, possessed sovereignty over the Cherokee lands and the gold mines.

The events of 1830, in which the Cherokees lost control of their gold region, reversed the progress that the Cherokees had made in the last one hundred years in learning how to control European access to their mineral riches. Gold was not the first mineral in Cherokee country to cause friction between Europeans and the Cherokees. The Cherokee Nation possessed many minerals that were essential to daily life or provided a source of income for both Native American and white settlers. The minerals targeted for exploitation by Europeans varied over time and as events, such as the War of 1812, created a demand for those resources. The types of people seeking to control Cherokee minerals also varied, from English tradesmen to subsistence farmers and land speculators to elite southern planters. Ultimately, the ability of the Cherokees to control access to their mineral resources depended on whether all parties agreed on which entities legitimately controlled those resources.

Kaolin

One of the earliest documented efforts by Europeans to extract minerals from Cherokee country involved white clay. In the 1730s, Andrew Duche, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, established a pottery in Charleston, South Carolina that manufactured products similar to his father's pottery in Philadelphia. After honing his craft for five years in Charleston, he moved to New Windsor, South Carolina where he subsequently met and befriended Roger Lacey, the agent to the Cherokees. In 1737, at the behest of his friend Lacey, Duche moved to Savannah where he began experimenting with the production of porcelain. It is not clear if Duche used Cherokee

clay from the beginning of his porcelain-making career. However, by the time he moved to Savannah, he was importing it from Cherokee territory. News of the quality of the Cherokees' white clay, or kaolin, reached England in the mid-eighteenth century. English manufacturers, including Staffordshire potter Josiah Wedgwood, worried that they might lose sales of exports to the American colonies because of the availability of the high quality Cherokee clay that was being used in the new American porcelain industry. It is possible that Duche shipped the first load of Cherokee kaolin to England about 1744 to the owners of a porcelain factory in London who were fellow Quakers. Cherokee kaolin continued to be used in porcelain making in England for several years. In 1766, Wedgwood became interested in securing Cherokee clay for his factory and sent an agent, Thomas Griffiths, to acquire several tons to be shipped back to England. Griffiths landed in Charleston and set out for the Cherokee village of Ayoree, near present day Iotla, North Carolina. Ayoree, also listed on eighteenth-century maps as Hyoree, was a town of about 100 warriors and was part of the group of Middle Towns. In December 1766, Griffiths discovered the old clay pit at Ayoree and began to clear out an accumulation of brush. On the fourth day of working the pit, the headmen of Ayoree arrested Griffiths for trespassing. The Englishman negotiated his release by agreeing to pay a price of 500 pounds of leather for each ton of kaolin that he removed. With the Cherokees' blessing, Griffiths hauled five tons of clay on packhorses to Fort Prince George where he moved the clay to wagons destined for Charleston and ultimately England. At his factory in Staffordshire, Wedgwood used the Cherokee clay to produce gems, cameos, and jasperware. In 1775, he began to lose interest in

Cherokee clay because he found an alternate source of clay in Cornwall and by the end of the 1780s, kaolin shipments to England had ceased.[128]

The Cherokees did not perceive Griffith's trespass onto their lands as a serious problem; the intrusion involved only a limited number of Europeans and the Cherokees clearly outnumbered the miners. The Cherokees quickly gained control of the situation and were able to negotiate a price that satisfied both parties. Future problems with mineral-seeking Europeans, however, involved greater numbers of people as white settlements drew nearer to the Cherokees, which in turn caused an increasing white demand for access to Cherokee minerals. Problems caused by this influx of whites seeking minerals became more difficult for either side to control, and therefore increased the severity of the threat to the Cherokees. As explained in the following pages of this chapter, the Cherokees developed a variety of methods for dealing with white miners as threats to their lands and national security increased.

Salt

Salt was a staple of early American life because of its use in the preservation of meat. Pioneers who moved into new areas west of the Alleghenies often brought salt with them to ensure that they had an ample supply to tide them over until they could find a local source in their new, unfamiliar environment. Many settlers of Scots-Irish and German descent who made

[128] George Hunter, 1751 untitled map of trade paths from Charleston into Cherokee country, Map 34, MSS 85-14, Cherokee Maps Collection, Western Carolina University; John Stuart, *A Map of Cherokee Country*, 1761, Map 41, MSS 85-14, Cherokee Maps Collection, Western Carolina University. Note: Hunter's 1751 map lists 60 Cherokee warriors for the town of Hyoree. Stuart's 1761 map lists 100 warriors for the town of Ayoree. The location of these differently spelled towns between Cowee and Watoga indicate that they are the same town. Other maps show a third spelling of Jorhee; William L. Anderson, "Cherokee Clay", 477-510.

their way down the Great Wagon Road of Virginia into Tennessee or ventured into Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap brought salt from the Kanawha Valley of Virginia (now West Virginia). Europeans had known about the Great Buffalo lick in the Kanawha River Valley since they first ventured into the area sometime in the mid-eighteenth century. They found pottery and primitive salt wells that had been abandoned, indicating that Indians had actively mined the area. In fact, the Cherokees, Shawnees, Tuscaroras, Iroquois, and Delawares had all used the area as a source of salt. The Cherokees claimed lands west of the Kanawha River and were upset when they were left out of negotiations at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 when the British obtained land cessions from the Six Nations. In an effort to preserve Cherokee friendship, a new line defining the western limit of Anglo settlement was set at the Treaty of Lochaber in 1770. This new treaty allowed white settlement in the saline district of the Kanawha while protecting the Cherokee hunting grounds in Kentucky from settlement for a few more years.[129]

The first white efforts to develop the Kanawha salt deposits into an industry began in 1797 when Elisha Brooks leased land by the river and sank three hollow sycamore trees into the ground. The trunks acted as wells to access the salty brine beneath the ground. Brooks produced 150 pounds (three bushels) of salt per day by boiling the brine in kettles. Other settlers in the area developed innovative methods of extracting the salt and by 1810 Kanawha had become a mecca for salt production with sixteen small salt producers located along the banks of the river. Several of these salt manufacturers shipped salt to Nashville and to markets along the Tennessee

[129] Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 249-50; Otis K. Rice, *The Allegheny Frontier: West Virginia Beginnings, 1730-1830* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 1970), 11, 64-65; John E. Stealey, *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt Business and Western Markets* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1993), 9.

River. Kanawha salt production was further boosted by the War of 1812 when imports of salt from Liverpool were blocked.[130]

Saline springs were common in the Cherokee homelands. Cherokees as well as white settlers boiled the water to make salt and then filled tree trunks with the crystals to feed their horses and cattle. These homemade mangers, called lick logs, provided the name of the Cherokee village of Lick Log, Georgia. Salt was also used in indigenous barter systems and in trade with European immigrants.[131]

Middle Tennessee contained several large salt springs which were used by wildlife, Native Americans, and Euro-Americans, and the licks became the destination of many of Middle Tennessee's earliest settlers. Anglo-American hunters had followed buffalo and other wildlife to these sites in the 1760s and 1770s, became familiar with the area, and returned in the late 1770s and 1780s to establish settlements. For example, James Robertson, who emigrated from the Watauga settlements in 1779–1780, settled at French Lick, at present-day Nashville, one of the best salt springs on the Cumberland River. Other early settlements were established at Bledsoe's Lick, Johnson's Lick, and Mansker's Lick. The region did not contain permanent Cherokee villages, but the Cherokees did set up winter hunting camps there. The Chickasaws, Creeks, Shawnees, and Delawares also hunted in the area and were upset when whites erected stockaded villages and took control of their salt springs. Small raiding parties of Indians began attacking the settlers around Nashborough (renamed Nashville in 1784) beginning in 1780. The Chickamauga Cherokees were among the most persistent. In April 1780, for example, they drew James

---

[130] Rice, *The Allegheny Frontier*, 310; Kurlansky, *Salt*, 250-51; Stealey, *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt*, 9-10, 15, 35, 78.
[131] Tench Coxe, *A Statement of the Arts and Manufactures*, xlvi; Goodwin, *Cherokees in Transition,* 29; Payne-Butrick, 1:133.

Robertson and many of his men out of Fort Nashborough and into an ambush. Robertson's militia probably would have suffered greater losses had the people inside the fort not released dogs and the Chickamaugans not been distracted by runaway horses.[132]

Conflict over the Cumberland settlements continued well into the last decade of the century. At a Cherokee meeting at Oostenaula in the Cherokee Nation in 1792, Little Turkey, one of the most influential leaders at the time, complained of white intrusions on the Cumberland and voiced the opinion that whites were illegal intruders on lands that the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Creeks continued to use as a hunting ground. In June 1792, Robertson and his son were both shot by unidentified Indians on the family plantation in a challenge to white claims of land ownership. The elder Robertson was shot through both arms while the son was wounded in his thigh. Both recovered, but another of Robertson's sons was killed by Indians two years later.[133]

The cost of defense of the Cumberland and other frontier settlements in the old Southwest concerned Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. In 1792, he wrote that "the U.S. find[s] an Indian war too serious a thing, to risk incurring one merely to gratify a few intruders with settlements which are to cost the other inhabitants of the U. S. a thousand times their value in taxes for carrying on the war they produce." Jefferson and other government officials urged

---

[132] Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 76-82, 92, 109, 191; J. G. M. Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 1853 (Reprint, Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1999), 191-95; James Robertson to Daniel Smith, 20 April 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 136-37.

[133] William Blount to James Robertson, 1 April 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4: 132-36; William Blount to Henry Knox, 4 July 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:157-59; Henry Knox to George Washington, 28 July 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:159-61.

Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws to meet at Nashborough in an attempt to end hostilities. The meeting, however, was unsuccessful and hostilities continued.[134]

In 1794, concerns over "Banditti Indian" threats to the Cumberland settlements caused Secretary of War Henry Knox to call a force of militia into service to protect Davidson and Sumner counties and transportation routes to the settlements. Knox also sent six howitzers, one hundred rounds of ammunition for each, and two hundred old muskets that were in need of repair. Despite the accumulated force and protection, depredations continued. Frustrated citizens of the Territory South of the River Ohio addressed a memorial to the House of Representatives urging the use of force against the Cherokees and Creeks: "Fear, not love, is the only means by which Indians can be governed; and until they in turn are made to feel the horrors of war, they will not know the value of peace . . . ." It was not until after the 1805 treaty of Tellico Blockhouse established a land cession connecting the Washington and Mero districts of Tennessee that the Cumberland settlements began to feel secure. Until then, the settlements around the salt licks on the Cumberland were isolated from the rest of Tennessee and vulnerable to attack. (The 1805 treaty will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.)[135]

Although salt springs were fairly common in Tennessee, they were smaller than those at Kanawha and the brines were weaker. This meant that more salt brine was processed to obtain the same number of bushels. The size of the salt springs, coupled with primitive methods used in

---

[134] Thomas Jefferson to David Campbell, 27 March 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:130-31; William Blount to Henry Knox, 4 July 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:157-59; Henry Knox to George Washington, 28 July 1792, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:159-61; Henry Knox to George Washington, 11 April 1794, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:337-38.

[135] Henry Knox to George Washington, 11 April 1794, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:337-38; Griffith Rutherford and David Wilson to Congress of the United States of America, 18 September 1794, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 4:354-55; Treaty at Tellico, 27 October 1805, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, Vol. 1 (Washington D. C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832), 698.

production and cost of transportation, prevented large scale salt operations like those in Kanawha from evolving in Tennessee. The demand for salt varied depending on factors like the growth of populations, interruptions in transportation caused by outbreaks of hostilities between whites and Indians, and the growth of the livestock industry, but the demand for salt often outweighed local production and required salt to be imported into Tennessee from Kentucky and Virginia. Salt importation reached a peak in the 1830s when the thriving livestock industry in the Knoxville area required large quantities of salt for meat preservation. Despite the fact that settlements in Middle Tennessee grew up around salt licks, salt often had to be imported into Middle Tennessee as well. For example, John Coffee, a nephew-in-law of Andrew Jackson, brought salt and lead to Middle Tennessee from the Illinois country by way of the Cumberland River. The demand for salt and salted meat in the South also increased in the 1820s and 1830s thanks to a series of Indian removals. Detachments of emigrating Indians were supplied with large amounts of salted pork, beef, bacon, and lesser quantities of salt.[136]

When salt was scarce, alternatives were found for preserving meat. White Americans rubbed unrefined sugar or brown molasses on meat to preserve it. Coarse sugar or molasses, water, and sometimes saltpeter could be mixed with salt to reduce the amount of salt needed to preserve meat. Cherokees created a substitute for salt by collecting moss from the bottom of streams, drying it, and then burning it. The ashes were leached and the lye boiled until it reached the consistency of bar soap, and was then used to preserve meats and other foods. By 1810, people in some regions of the United States and most of Canada froze meats in winter. By the

[136] Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 191; Stealey, *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt*, 15; Rozema, *Voices from the Trail of Tears*, 24, 82-92.

1820s, fish was packed in snow, a practice referred to as "salting in snow." In the warmer months, underground icehouses constructed of logs and thatch were used to store meat.[137]

By the late eighteenth century, European contact had changed many traditional Cherokee social and subsistence practices, which affected the management of the Nation's salt supplies. Cherokees had begun to establish individual farms and more dispersed settlements, changes accompanied by a shift from clan and town management of shared resources such as communal salt springs to more emphasis on private control of resources existing on individual farms. These developments, along with the influx of Euro-Americans into the Nation, created a need to establish new guidelines. Competition for salt wells and other resources such as saltpeter caves required increased supervision from the National Council to prevent and settle disputes. Industries like salt production that provided a source of income were regulated when they were not for personal use. Cherokee citizens were free to dig for salt near their own homes; however, the establishment of a salt well on public property required special permission from the National Council and National Committee. In 1824, the Cherokees adopted a law that prohibited the digging of new salt wells within a half mile of any such well already sanctioned by the government.[138]

Saltpeter

Native Americans have mined North American caves for hundreds of years. Archaeological work at Mammoth Cave and Salts Cave in Mammoth Cave National Park in

[137] Payne-Butrick, 1: 96; Tench Coxe, *A Statement of the Arts and Manufactures*, xlvi; Kurlansky, *Salt*, 305.
[138] Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 33.

south central Kentucky has revealed that indigenous people found several types of minerals worth removing from the ceiling and walls of those caves. Early people mined great quantities of gypsum, leading well-known cave archaeologist Patty Jo Watson to believe that it was traded outside the immediate area. Indigenous peoples may also have used gypsum to make plaster or paint and for ceremonial purposes that utilized its supposed supernatural properties. Mirabilite and epsomite, both cathartic salts or purgatives, were mined by Native Americans and mirabilite may have been used as a seasoning in lieu of salt.[139]

As the boundaries of the frontier reached the Allegheny Mountains in the mid-eighteenth century, people of European descent began mining former Indian caves. Old eighteenth and nineteenth-century saltpeter mines can be found in mountain caves ranging from Pennsylvania to Alabama. Kentucky, which was claimed by the Cherokees and formed from several land cessions in the 1770s and 1780s, contained some of the richest deposits of nitrates. Salts Cave and Mammoth Cave are the best known of the Kentucky saltpeter caves and both were mined during the War of 1812. Approximately seventy caves in East Tennessee have been identified as having been mined for saltpeter at one time or another. Marion County on the Alabama border sits on land ceded by the Cherokees in 1817, 1819, and 1835 and, at nine, claims the largest number of known saltpeter caves. Claiborne County, on land ceded by the Cherokees in the late eighteenth century, and Sullivan County, on land ceded by the Cherokees in the 1770s, each has

[139] Patty Jo Watson, "Preface," in *Archaeology of the Mammoth Cave Area*, Patty Jo Watson, ed. (New York: Academic Press, 1974), xvi.

over a half-dozen saltpeter caves. Graffiti in a saltpeter cave in Claiborne County dates white exploration of that cave to as early as June 1797.[140]

Saltpeter was processed to produce potassium nitrate, the main ingredient in gunpowder. It made up 75% of the ingredients, while sulphur and charcoal represented 15% and 10%, respectively. The skills involved in processing saltpeter were brought from Europe by emigrants and imperial military forces. Most eighteenth and early nineteenth-century saltpeter works were small operations involving only one or two people. Caves were mined irregularly and saltpeter processed as needed or in winter when operations did not interfere with farming. The resulting gunpowder might be sold in small quantities in stores, used in trade, or used for personal consumption. During years when America was at war, including the years 1775–81, 1812–15, and 1861–65, demand for saltpeter increased and small partnerships were formed to expand operations.[141]

The first gunpowder mill in Tennessee, owned by Mary McKeehan Patton, was in operation by 1777 in what is now Carter County in the northeast part of the state. Gunpowder from Patton's mill was used to supply the Overmountain Men at their victory at King's Mountain in 1780. By the mid-1790s, a small industry in saltpeter mining had developed in East Tennessee and continued to grow for two more decades. Some saltpeter was mined and processed into gunpowder to be sold locally by merchants in growing towns. In 1792, for example, Knoxville merchant Charles McClung advertised locally manufactured gunpowder for sale, and in 1796,

---

[140] Carol A. Hill, "Geological Notes," 252; Patty Jo Watson, "Recent History of Salts Cave," in *Archaeology of the Mammoth Cave Area*, Patty Jo Watson, ed. (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 21; Marion O. Smith, *Saltpeter Mining in East Tennessee* (Maryville, TN: Byron's Graphic Arts, 1990), 1-2.
[141] Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 1-2.

James Ore announced that he wished to purchase saltpeter for two shillings per pound to sell at his store on German Creek. Local works also produced powder for more distant markets. In 1804, Jedidiah Morse wrote in his *American Gazetteer* that as early as 1796, Tennessee had produced several tons of saltpeter which were shipped to Atlantic markets. By 1806, four powder mills in Kingsport, Tennessee were producing large quantities of gunpowder and by 1810, Carter, Sullivan, Washington, Greene, Cocke, Jefferson, Granger, Campbell, Blount, Roane, and Rhea, all counties in East Tennessee that had belonged to the Cherokees, were producing gunpowder.[142]

The presence of a saltpeter cave on a parcel of land made that property more valuable. In 1797, a land speculator from North Carolina, William Tyrell, advertised land in present-day Roane County for sale in the Knoxville *Gazette*. The advertisement touted a saltpeter cave and a big spring on the property. Another saltpeter cave, in Fountain City in Knox County, was owned by John Adair, who established a fort and trading post in the late 1780s. Graffiti in the cave dates to 1801, 1809, and 1819, and it is probable that Adair used the cave to mine saltpeter for personal consumption, though he may have also sold small quantities in his trading post.[143]

In 1802, Cherokee federal agent Return J. Meigs reported to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn that Cherokee territory contained a number of saltpeter caves and that the Cherokees wanted to obtain someone of European descent who could set up a gunpowder mill. The Cherokees planned to allow the manufacturer to sell the powder that he produced, but with the understanding that the Cherokees would be given a portion in consideration for allowing him to

---

[142] Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 5; Tench Coxe, *A Statement of the Arts and Manufactures of the United States of America for the Year 1810*, 138; Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 190.
[143] Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 2-3.

mine their caves. This marked the beginning of the practice of bringing in people of European heritage to set up saltpeter mining operations and gunpowder mills in Cherokee territory. As part of the federal civilization program, the Cherokees were encouraged to use white expertise in agriculture, education, and various technologies and industries to aid them in their adjustment to the white man's world. The Cherokees had to give permission for white experts to enter their country and begin mining or milling operations and the Cherokee agent, in this case Meigs, would decide if the whites were of good character. If they met with Meigs's approval, he would issue a passport to them and any slaves they brought as laborers. At least a dozen mines in the Cherokee Nation in the present states of Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee were mined by whites with Cherokee permission.[144]

In late 1801, Joseph Reed, formerly of South Carolina and a veteran of the Battle of King's Mountain, traveled from his home in Grainger County, Tennessee to Nickajack cave in present-day Marion County, Tennessee to extract saltpeter. Reed worked the cave for some time but ran into financial problems and had to end his operations. Two years later, James Ore, who had been looking for saltpeter to sell in his store at German Creek, received permission from the Cherokees to resume operations at Nickajack after Reed's venture failed. Ore was a militia leader who led a series of brutal attacks on the Cherokee Lower Towns in 1794 which led to the defeat of Chickamaugan leaders Doublehead, Bloody Fellow, and John Watts. Ore may have become aware of Nickajack cave as a result of his expedition against the Chickamauga Indians. Ore and four others obtained permission to mine the Nickajack cave and Sauta cave, near present-day Scottsboro, Alabama. Their efforts were more profitable than Reed's and in the

[144] Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 2-3; Return J. Meigs to John Walker, 8 August 1813, Records of the Cherokee Agency, Reel 5.

spring of 1804, the Cherokee National Council decided that after Ore had paid off Reed's debts to the Nation and had operated the mine at Nickajack five years, then Ore should begin to pay the Cherokees two hundred pounds of gunpowder each year. From 1804 to December of 1809, Ore produced over 60,000 pounds of powder.[145]

While Ore's Nickajack and Sauta operations were the largest saltpeter works in Cherokee country, the Cherokees continued to lease other caves for whites to mine. In 1804, the Cherokee National Council gave William Woodward permission to continue working a saltpeter cave near Chickamauga Creek, at present-day Chattanooga, on the condition that he pay two hundred pounds of powder annually to the Cherokees. The Council also leased a cave near Tellico, Tennessee for five years. This cave, near the northern boundary of the Nation, was otherwise being pilfered by whites who carried soil away to be made into gunpowder. In 1809, Agent Return J. Meigs published the results of a survey of the Cherokee Nation that reported three saltpeter mines and two gun powder mills there.[146]

Beginning in 1807 with the Embargo Act, national events placed an increased demand on saltpeter. A shortage of saltpeter caused by the Embargo Act, the Nonintercourse Act of 1809, and the declaration of war against Britain in 1812 resulted in a five-fold increase in the price of saltpeter. Spurred by the price increases, people in southern mountain states from Virginia to Alabama sought opportunities to engage in saltpeter mining. The greatest concentration of miners in the Cherokee Nation during the War of 1812 was in northern Alabama, although the passports for men seeking work in Cherokee country also reflect an increased interest in

---

[145] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 25, 168-72; William Blount to Henry Knox, 24 October 1794; *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* 1: 529; Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 4; *Moravian Diaries* Dec. 16, 1806, 1:148.
[146] Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 5.

Tennessee mines where workers headed to saltpeter caves in Monroe County and at Nickajack. And in 1813, a United States Senator, Charles Tait of Georgia, sought permission for his employee, a Mr. Thompson, to work two caves above Ditto's Landing in Mississippi Territory (present-day Huntsville, Alabama).[147]

In December 1812, the missionaries at Springplace recorded the arrival from Philadelphia of James Cogan Warren, who was seeking to negotiate with the Cherokees for permission to establish a saltpeter mine at a cave in the Cherokee Nation. It is not clear if Warren was successful in his attempts to establish a powder works, but he evidently settled in the Southeast because he turns up in the historical record in 1814 at Fort Jackson in Creek Territory where he is responsible for provisioning friendly Creeks with beef. Warren wrote a report to General Jackson describing the movements of Creek leaders Talisee Tixico and Expocokoke Harjo. He also advised Jackson that he believed some of the Creeks who had fled to Pensacola might defect to the Americans.[148]

In 1813, Return J. Meigs was drawn into several disputes over the ownership of saltpeter caves on or near the Tennessee River. One of these disputes involved a cave located south of the Elk River near its head, and was sparked when a man named Wilson, who wanted to work the cave, sought clarification of the location of the Cherokee border. The dispute centered on the

[147] Return J. Meigs to John Walker, 8 August 1813, Records of the Cherokee Agency, Reel 6; Smith, *Saltpeter Mining*, 5-6; Potter, *Passports*, 124-25; Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 190.
[148] *Moravian Diaries*, 16 Dec. 1806, 1:488, 510; Report from James Cogan Warren to Andrew Jackson, from Fort Jackson, 10 Oct. 1814, Library of Congress, Andrew Jackson Papers, microfilm reel 13, copy on file at The Papers of Andrew Jackson Project Files.

question of whether the cave was situated on Cherokee land or land governed by the state of Tennessee. The parties ultimately decided that the cave did sit on Cherokee territory.[149]

Another controversy centered around a saltpeter cave a mile from the mouth of the Elk River near the Muscle Shoals. The cave was on land claimed by Chickamauga leader Doublehead. With the aid of Georgia Congressman William W. Bibb, who became the first Governor of the state of Alabama in 1819, a man named Le Roy Pope of Madison County, Mississippi Territory (now Alabama) received permission from Secretary of War William Eustis to work the saltpeter cave belonging to Doublehead. John Walker and John Lowrey, two prominent Cherokee leaders, with the assistance of Colonel Gideon Morgan, Jr., received permission from the Cherokee Nation to work the same mine. A third party, a company formed by John Strother, John Reid, and John Davidson, received permission from the Chickasaw Nation to work the mine. To settle the dispute, Meigs referred to an agreement reached between the United States and the Cherokees on January 7, 1806 which Meigs interpreted as having granted rights to the land in dispute to both the Cherokees and Chickasaws. Meigs decided to give permission to both Pope and the Walker-Lowrey interests to mine the cave because one had received permission from the Secretary of War and the others had received permission from the Cherokees. Meigs also cited the fact that the Cherokees had occupied the area long before the United States acknowledged the Chickasaw claim in 1806. Meigs's denial of permission to Strother was only temporary pending his belief that the United Sates would "do them [the Chickasaws] justice, and eventually settle the rights to them or the Cherokees perfectly satisfactorily to each party." Walker wrote to Meigs to protest the decision and to refuse to

[149] William Quisenbury(?) to Return J. Meigs, 4 May 1813, Records of the Cherokee Agency, Reel 6.

partner with Colonel Pope. Walker argued that the Secretary of War had no legal right to grant Pope access to the mine: he likened the situation to Eustis authorizing "Col. Pope to take my house and plantation." Three months later, Meigs received a letter from prominent Chickasaw leader George Colbert stating that after Pope received permission from the Secretary of War to work the mine, Pope approached Colbert at his horse farm to get permission from the Chickasaws. Colbert advised Pope that he could not authorize the mining operation; Pope had to get permission from the headmen of the Chickasaw Nation. Colbert told Meigs that he did not believe that Pope had gone to the Chickasaw headmen. Still hoping to obtain permission to mine the cave, Strother's group sent its agent, John Henry Eaton, who later served as Andrew Jackson's Secretary of War from 1829 to 1831, to the cave but was denied permission to dig by an officer at nearby Fort Hampton. It is not clear exactly who ended up working the cave or for how long. Some records suggest the possibility that Pope may have worked the cave for a few months. The Walker party began operations at the cave but apparently abandoned it in the latter part of 1813 in order to fight in the Creek War.[150]

As suggested above, these disputes often drew white miners into Cherokee political and legal affairs. The same occurred in 1822, when saltpeter mine owner Captain James Reed became involved in a crisis in the Cherokee Nation that lasted for several years. The Creek Path conspiracy began in 1820 when a group of leaders from the Cherokee village of Creek Path in Alabama went to see Andrew Jackson while he was treating with the Choctaws. The purpose of

[150] Return J. Meigs, "Permission for Le Roy Pope, Esq. and John Walker and John Lowrey to work a Salt Petre Cave on Doublehead's Reserve," 7 January 1813, Records of the Cherokee Agency, Reel 6; John Walker to Return J. Meigs, 18 January 1813, Records of the Cherokee Agency, Reel 6; John Strother to Return J. Meigs, 29 March 1813, Records of the Cherokee Agency, Reel 6; Marion O. Smith, ed. *The 1812-13 Quest to Mine Saltpeter at Elk River Cave, Alabama: The Documentary Record*, Pamphlet (n.p., 1999), 1-3.

the visit, which was not sanctioned by Cherokee national leaders, was to request that their lands be set aside as reserves so that the National Council could not cede their lands in an attempt to guarantee the permanence of other lands belonging to the Cherokees. The Creek Path leaders hoped to sell their reserves to white settlers and use the money to finance their emigration to Arkansas. Whites, like James Reed, who leased mines and other land in the Cherokee Nation, encouraged the actions of the Creek Path leaders because they hoped to acquire ownership of the property that they leased. The Creek Path leaders sent Captain Reed to meet with Tennessee Governor William Carroll to encourage him to use his contacts in Congress to allow them to sell 1.25 million acres in northeast Alabama and Tennessee in defiance of the Cherokee National Council and of nationalist leaders like John Ross and Charles Hicks, who did not plan to cede any Cherokee lands to the government. By this time, the Cherokees had passed laws preventing the sale of any Cherokee lands to non-citizens. Jackson, who supported the efforts of any Indians who wished to emigrate west of the Mississippi, convinced them to get the signature of Cherokee Principal Chief Pathkiller. When the National Council learned of the conspiracy, it insisted that Pathkiller's mark had been forged and indicted several prominent Creek Path leaders, including George Guess, also known as Sequoyah. After their plot was exposed, the Creek Path leaders continued to communicate with Jackson and Carroll directly and through emissaries like saltpeter mine owner James Reed. Their efforts were unfruitful because Secretary of War John C. Calhoun and President James Monroe insisted on dealing only with Cherokee national leaders on land cessions. Several of the Creek Path leaders, including George Guess, did emigrate but without the opportunity of selling their lands.[151]

[151] Andrew Jackson to John C. Calhoun, 18 January 1821, *American State Papers, Indian*

The 1840 census does not report amounts of saltpeter mined, only the number of gunpowder mills and pounds of gunpowder produced. In less industrially advanced regions like the South in 1840, saltpeter was often converted to gunpowder closer to where it was mined than in more industrialized regions like the North. But southern saltpeter was also being shipped to northern powder mills. Although gunpowder manufacturing figures cannot accurately reflect the amount of saltpeter being mined in an area, it is one of the few sources that allows us to get a feel for the demand for saltpeter in the South. By 1840, the demand for gunpowder had decreased and as a result the number of gunpowder mills and saltpeter mines in the South dropped. Neither Georgia nor Alabama reported any powder mills in the 1840 U. S. census, and North Carolina reported just one powder mill and only 200 pounds of gunpowder manufactured. The mill was located in Surry County in western North Carolina on the Virginia border. These low figures may, in part, reflect problems in gathering data for the manufactures census rather than total cessation of production. Tennessee reported ten powder mills and 10,333 pounds of gunpowder manufactured. Six of the mills, which reported 8,233 pounds, were located in East Tennessee in the counties of Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Jefferson, and Sullivan. The remaining four mills were located in Middle Tennessee in the counties of Giles, Overton, and Warren. While the Cherokees had claimed all of these Tennessee lands at one time, none of the counties still

---

Affairs, 2: 502; "Address of the Chiefs and Warriors of Creek Path Town, in the Cherokee Nation, to Major General Andrew Jackson," 3 January 1821, *American State Papers*, 2: 503-504; Wasaucy, Speaker, et. al to William Carroll, 2 November 1822, *American State Papers*, 2: 505-506; "Views of the Cherokees in Relation to Further Cessions of their Lands," John Ross, George Lowrey, Major Ridge, Elijah Hicks to the United States Senate, *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, 16 April 1824; Duncan G. Campbell to John C. Calhoun, 18 December 1822, Letters received by the Secretary of War, NARA, M221, Roll 95; Duncan G. Campbell to John C. Calhoun, 28 February 1823, Letters received by the Secretary of War, NARA, M221, Roll 95; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 267-71.

producing saltpeter in 1840 were located on lands within the 1819 boundaries of the Cherokee Nation. Kentucky reported eleven powder mills and 282,500 pounds of gunpowder produced. Even these numbers are small when compared to the figures reported by the leaders in the industry: Massachusetts reported 14 powder mills and 2,315,215 pounds of gunpowder manufactured, while Delaware reported 2,100,000 pounds produced in twenty-seven powder mills. New York and Pennsylvania each reported over one million pounds of gunpowder produced. These higher figures for gunpowder manufacturing in the North reflect the faster rate of industrialization of that region and advances in production. One example is the rapid rise of the Dupont gunpowder plant near Wilmington, Delaware, that adopted techniques for improved powder manufacturing from France. Gunpowder operations in the rural areas of the South remained small and primitive and had difficulty in keeping pace with northern producers. Despite declining production in the South, a new saltpeter operation at Alum Cave Bluff in what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park began in 1841. In 1850, the only mill reported in operation in Tennessee was located west of Nashville. Many of the caves in the Cherokee Nation, such as Nickajack and Sauta, that had once been mined but had fallen silent by the 1840s were reopened at the onset of the Civil War.[152]

Iron

During the eighteenth century, wildlife, Indians, and travelers were drawn to a springs at the base of Whitaker Mountain in what is today Cherokee County, South Carolina. The springs

[152] Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 190; 1840 census, 186, 258, 362; Smith, *Saltpeter Mining,* 7-8; Jack Kelly, *Gunpowder, Alchemy, Bombards, and Pyrotechnics: The History of the Explosive That Changed the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 173.

were the only source of water between the mountain and the Broad River and were on a well-traveled route, known as the Virginia Trail, used by Carolina settlers to drive their cattle to Philadelphia. The area was ceded by the Cherokees to the British Crown in 1755, but it remained sparsely settled until after the American Revolution. The reputation of the limestone springs began to grow sometime before the Revolution as travelers recognized the healing powers of the springs. Thanks to travelers on the Virginia Trail and visitors to the limestone springs, the area also became known for its beds of iron. Before the American Revolution, several small iron works were built along streams near the site of present-day Blacksburg. The availability of limestone, water power, and timber, all three important ingredients in the manufacture of iron products, contributed to the growth of the iron business in the area. By 1810, at least three forges had been built in Cherokee County. Because of the demand for iron and lead during the War of 1812, the number of iron foundries quickly reached six and two lead mines and two shot towers were placed in operation. By the 1820s, the area became known as the "Old Iron District" and had attracted the attention of several Low Country investors who wanted to buy lands and mineral rights for lands that were not available for purchase. The Limestone Springs, which produced a vital ingredient for the manufacture of iron, were also developed as a resort in the 1830s.[153]

The iron deposits found in Cherokee County, South Carolina are not unique in the Southern Appalachians; iron can be found throughout the mountains. In the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the Great Smoky Mountains were called the Great Iron Mountains. Because of the abundance of iron deposits, limestone, and timber in the region, the

[153] Bobby Gilmer Moss, *The Old Iron District: A Study of the Development of Cherokee County — 1750-1897* (Clinton, SC: Jacobs Press, 1972), 203-204, 206, 270-71.

mining and production of pig iron was an important commercial practice in the Southern Appalachians in the first half of the nineteenth century.[154]

Iron products were a critical part of everyday life for Euro-Americans. When whites first moved into former Cherokee lands, they brought as many iron tools and utensils as they could fit in their wagon or pack on their horse. But poor roads and transportation problems, combined with the abundance of iron in the region, often made it cheaper for settlers to develop local iron mines and blacksmith shops to make nails, hoes, bands for wheels and casks, horseshoes, guns, and other necessities than to freight them in from a distance. Forges developed across the South, but especially in the foothills of the Southern Appalachians. These local forges produced large quantities of bar iron which was used as a medium of exchange in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some blacksmiths used it to pay their apprentices and it was also used to pay farm workers. In 1803, for example, Michael Swingle of Carter County, Tennessee paid off some notes using bars of iron. Other citizens of Carter County used it to buy horses, purchase land, and pay store accounts.[155]

The first known ironworks in Tennessee, King's Iron, was established in 1784, seven years after the land on which it was established was ceded by the Cherokees. The ironworks was located in present-day Sullivan County. Other ironworks quickly followed in the area. The first ironworks in Carter County, also created from lands ceded in 1777, was built around 1792. The area is blessed with all the raw materials used in iron manufacture, including iron ore, timber, water power, and limestone. The state of North Carolina assisted in the development of the iron

[154] Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 192; Pierce, *The Great Smokies,* 16.
[155] Robert T. Nave, *A History of the Iron Industry in Carter County to 1860* (Johnson City, TN: s.n., 1998), 47.

industry (this region was then still part of North Carolina) by passing an act in 1788 that allowed ironworks owners to apply for 3,000 acres of state land. After the applicant filed his request, the county court condemned the land and declared it unfit for cultivation. The applicant had three years to establish his ironworks and produce 5,000 pounds of iron or the land reverted to the state. The land was also exempted from taxation for ten years. The county's iron industry grew quickly and by 1836 led the region in iron production. The 1840 census for Carter County reported three iron furnaces and eight forges. Johnson County, which until 1836 was part of Carter County, reported one furnace and nineteen forges. Because of problems with reporting of manufactures in the 1840 census, these figures are probably low.[156]

When the Territory South of the River Ohio was formed in 1790, North Carolina laws automatically became the governing laws of the new territory. Several settlers in the territory, including Landon Carter, took advantage of the law when they registered 3,000 acres of land on the Doe River in northeast Tennessee as iron land. The North Carolina law which provided condemned land to build ironworks also provided a model for the Tennessee General Assembly. In 1809, Tennessee passed a similar law that allowed ironmakers two years to get their businesses running. The land was tax exempt for ninety-nine years. Another bill to spur the industry had been proposed under the territorial government in 1794 to exempt iron producers from military service, but the bill was not approved by the U. S. House of Representatives.[157]

By the 1790s, many ironworks in Tennessee produced enough iron bars to begin shipping them to distant markets. Knoxville had become a port for the shipment of bar iron to Natchez and

[156] Nave, *A History of the Iron Industry*, 1-2, 4.
[157] Nave, *A History of the Iron Industry*, 4-5; Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 194-95; An Act to Accept the North Carolina Cession, 2 April 1790, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 13-17.

New Orleans. Cumberland Furnace, established in 1797 in Middle Tennessee by James Robertson and later purchased by Montgomery Bell, produced large quantities of iron bars and castings. Bell shipped boatloads of iron products to New Orleans, Natchez, and Nashville. Land speculator and Virginia merchant David Ross built an ironworks on the North Fork of the Holston River about 1789 in Hawkins County and began shipping iron products to Natchez and New Orleans. James and Robert Gillespie, owners of one of the earliest ironworks in Blount County, also sent their iron down the Tennessee River.[158]

Demand for iron caused some whites to look in the direction of the Cherokee Nation. In 1807, Colonel Elias W. Earle, a trader from Greenville, South Carolina, wrote to Secretary of War Henry Dearborn to propose that the federal government purchase a six-square-mile parcel of land near the mouth of Chickamauga Creek (present-day Chattanooga) from the Cherokees. Earle had travelled extensively in the Cherokee country and found several large deposits of iron ore. One of the richest was located at the mouth of Chickamauga Creek on the southern side of the Tennessee River, an area settled by the Chickamauga Cherokees in the late 1770s. It was an excellent location for an iron works because it was situated at the junction of several important overland trade routes where they crossed the Tennessee River as it cut through the mountains. Earle proposed that he be given a contract to establish both an ironworks and an arsenal at the site. Dearborn thought this was a good idea. The government had been trying to acquire all land on the south side of the Tennessee River for several years. Dearborn also felt that due to Indian hostilities in the region and threats from imperial governments on the gulf, the establishment of

[158] Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, 193-94; Sam B. Smith and Harriett Chapel Owsley, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, edited by Harold D. Moser, et al. 8 vols. to date (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980-), 1: 29n5; Burns, *Blount County*, 244.

an arsenal in the area would benefit the military. Finally, he believed that the Cherokees would see the advantages of adopting white man's industry and it would be a step in the acculturation process.[159]

Return J. Meigs spoke with the leaders of the Lower Towns about Earle's proposal because the iron ore was in their area. Many of the chiefs supported the plan because Earle's ironworks would provide a source of cheaper iron goods for the Chickamaugans. Not all of the Lower Town leaders liked the proposal, but Meigs ignored their complaints. For some time, Meigs had been playing the Lower Towns leadership against the chiefs of the Upper Towns with the goals of acquiring more land and encouraging emigration. The Lower Towns, located primarily but not exclusively in Alabama and the southeast corner of Tennessee near present-day Chattanooga, were settlements led by Chickamaugan leaders who broke away from the main body of Cherokees in the 1780s and 1790s over land cession disputes, particularly the 1785 Treaty of Hopewell. Many of the Chickamaugan leaders had come from the old Lower Towns of South Carolina. The leaders of the Upper Towns, which were largely located in Georgia and had been displaced from the Upper Towns of North Carolina and the Overhill Towns of East Tennessee, had supported the Treaty of Hopewell. Meigs attempted to exploit this split in Cherokee leadership by treating with the Upper and Lower Towns separately. The two groups did not always agree on who owned what lands or who had authority to negotiate on specific issues. Some of the Lower Town leaders, Doublehead in particular, had proposed the sale of 1.5

[159] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 119; Henry Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, 28 February 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency,* M-208, Reel 3; Henry Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, 19 February 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency,* M-208, Reel 3; Treaty with the Cherokee Indians, 2 December 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency,* M-208, Reel 3; Return J. Meigs to Elias Erle, 20 June 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency,* M-208, Reel 3.

million acres of land on the Tennessee River to the government with the understanding that some of the younger Lower Town chiefs would be given large reserves of land during the sale. Meigs wanted to tie this deal to an offer to buy one million acres of land above the Hiwassee River from the Upper Towns. The issue concerning the iron ore lands came up before the problems associated with the large land sale were resolved and became tangled in the negotiations for the 2.5 million acres.[160]

Several of the Lower Town leaders, including The Ridge and James Vann, objected to the plans to purchase another 2.5 million acres of lands from the Cherokees. Furthermore, many Cherokees resented Doublehead for his negotiations with the federal government that always benefited him. In an effort to stop Doublehead and his treating with Meigs and the government, a plot was hatched to kill Doublehead at the next ball play. After the game, a man named Bone Polisher accused Doublehead to his face of being a traitor for selling Cherokee lands. Bone Polisher pulled out a hatchet and Doublehead shot him. Assassins, including The Ridge and John Walker, killed Doublehead after he left the ball game.[161]

Meigs was furious. He had lost his most friendly Cherokee and one who was easily bribed with presents. Future land cessions would be harder to negotiate with Doublehead gone. The 2.5 million acres of land purchases were put on hold, but Meigs went through with the much smaller purchase of the iron ore property. In December 1807, Meigs called a meeting of twenty-three chiefs, personally chosen by him because of their former cooperation, and invited Earle to explain his proposition. Earle told the leaders that he planned to move a large number of whites

---

[160] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 118-20; Return J. Meigs to Henry Dearborn, 1 May 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency,* M-208, Reel 3.
[161] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 120; Statement of Colonel Joseph Phillips regarding the murder of Doublehead, 15 August 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 3.

to Chickamauga Creek to build and operate the mine and foundry. The labor force at the foundry would be comprised of whites and slaves, but not Cherokees. Earle would invest his own money and he expected to make a profit by selling war materials to the military. Although he planned to pay the Cherokees $5,000 and 1,000 bushels of corn as a purchase price, the Cherokees would receive no rent money or royalties from his profits. Meigs also explained to the Cherokees at the meeting that if Earle found the site unsuitable, the government reserved the right to give the land back to the Cherokees in exchange for another site of Earle's choosing.[162]

When the leaders present at the meeting resisted the proposal, Meigs threatened to withhold agricultural tools if they did not agree to the treaty. The Cherokees were experiencing a period of food shortages because of a poor harvest the previous fall, so the threats were persuasive. The Cherokees signed the agreement and Earle immediately returned to South Carolina to begin hiring for his new ironworks.[163]

A group of rebellious leaders, led by James Vann, John Lowrey, The Ridge, Pathkiller, Chulio, and Sour Mush, wrote to Dearborn objecting vehemently to the treaty. Dearborn ignored their pleas and failed to reply. Meanwhile, Earle proceeded with his plans to send a caravan of wagons with 100 families and supplies. Chulio sent a letter to the families explaining the tribe's objections to Earle's plans, and the families reacted by declining to move until they could be assured of their safety. Earle, in response, sent a smaller group of supply wagons to determine what manner of reception awaited them. On the orders of James Vann, who had been left out of negotiations over Earle's ironworks, disgruntled Cherokees met the wagons two miles before

---

[162] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 122-23.
[163] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 123-24; Return J. Meigs to Henry Dearborn, 24 March 1808, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 4; Treaty with the Cherokee Indians, 2 December 1807, *Records of the Cherokee Agency,* M-208, Reel 3.

they reached the Georgia Federal Road and stalled them for four days while Earle's wagon master, William Brown, visited James Vann's sister, the widow Falling, to appeal for help. She warned him that Vann was a dangerous man who might kill him, so Brown turned his wagons back to South Carolina.[164]

Frustrated by the rebellion of some of the younger leaders and his inability to negotiate additional large land cessions, Meigs wrote a lengthy letter to Dearborn enumerating many of the frustrations he encountered in dealing with the Cherokees. Meigs was convinced that many Cherokees had decided to remain hunters and had declined permanently to take up farming. Meigs doubted the possibility of success of the civilization program and the process of acquiring all of the Cherokee lands in piece-meal fashion, and he posited that the best hope of acquiring lands from the Cherokees was to offer them land in the Louisiana Territory in exchange. He recalled that the government had made such a proposal a few years earlier after the Louisiana Purchase made a land exchange possible. When Meigs proposed the idea to the Cherokees in 1804, they rejected it. Now, in 1808, he brought up the subject again with the Lower Town leaders. Meigs's continuing efforts to play the Upper and Lower Towns against each other were stymied, though, when a group of Upper Town chiefs traveled to Washington and complained to President Jefferson that they lacked the agricultural tools and mills that the government had provided the Lower Towns. Jefferson thought that their grievances about preferential treatment

[164] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 127; Affadavit of William Brown, 15 February 1808, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 4.

given to the Lower Towns had merit and he told Dearborn to order Meigs to redress their complaints.[165]

The immediate problem of the iron ore land sale was resolved when the state of Tennessee learned about the scheme. Meigs thought that the land lay in the Mississippi Territory, but in reality it lay inside the borders of Tennessee. Tennessee refused to approve the sale and the U. S. Senate refused to ratify the treaty. Although the problem with the iron ore property appeared to be settled, fallout from the dispute continued for over a decade. Earle continued to pursue the matter for several years and was eventually awarded over $900 in damages that were deducted from the Cherokee annuity. Earle's aborted scheme to establish a colony of white people in the vicinity of Ross's Landing also caused problems for the Brainerd Mission, established in 1818 in the same area. Remembering the failed Earle colony, many Cherokees objected to the influx of whites when the mission was established. Meigs's larger dilemma of how to acquire lands from the Cherokees remained an issue long after he died in 1823. The Cherokees' problem of a divided nation and rebellious younger leaders who objected to land cessions was partially resolved in the early 1820s when they began the process of developing a strong central government.[166]

Between 1808, when Earle's ironworks scheme failed, and 1838, the Cherokee removal, the demand for iron in the Cherokee Nation grew. As part of the federal civilization program and efforts by Cherokees to develop agricultural practices like their white neighbors, the demand for

---

[165] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 131-32; Return J. Meigs to Henry Dearborn, 9 February 1808, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 4; Henry Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, 5 May 1808, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 4; Henry Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, 25 March 1808, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 4.

[166] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascense*, 47, 133-34, 377; Duncan G. Campbell to John C. Calhoun, 29 January 1823, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, NARA, M-221, Roll 95.

tools, nails, horseshoes, and all kinds of iron products increased within the nation. The number of blacksmith shops began to rise to meet the demands for repairs of broken tools and to supply iron products for the growing meat and other industries. But the local supply could not meet the demand, causing a shortage of iron in the Nation and requiring a large quantity to be imported. For example, on May 1, 1820, the missionaries at Brainerd Mission recorded in their journal that they planned to have iron and steel shipped from Augusta, Georgia to supply metal for their new blacksmith shop.[167]

In the 1824 census conducted by the Cherokee Nation, first discussed in the chapter on agriculture, statistics were not collected for any industry involving mining. If iron mining was occurring inside the nation, it was done on a small scale. Although the historical record and the 1824 census do not record iron mines, the demand for iron in the Cherokee Nation is reflected by the 45 blacksmith shops that were reported there. The Chattooga district (see figure 6 in Chapter 1), located predominantly south of the Tennessee River in Alabama and extending east into Georgia, reported eleven blacksmith shops. The Chickamauga district, located in the northwest corner of Georgia and the northeast corner of Alabama, also recorded eleven blacksmith shops. The Ahmohee district reported the fourth largest number of blacksmith shops at seven. This district was located in the southeast corner of Tennessee below the Hiwassee River and east of the Tennessee River. The Hickory Log district, between the Etowah and Chattahoochee Rivers in the extreme southeast corner of the Blue Ridge physiographic province next to the Piedmont region, reported no blacksmith shops. The Aquohee, Taquohee, and Coosawattee districts were located within the mountainous Blue Ridge Province. The Aquohee district, located in the

[167] Phillips, *Brainerd Journal*, 168.

southwest corner of North Carolina, reported five blacksmith shops. Taquohee district, located in the north central area of Georgia on the North Carolina state line and in the heart of what later became the gold region, reported only one blacksmith shop. The Coosawattee district lay between the Oostanaula and Etowah rivers and reported ten blacksmith shops. With the exception of Aquohee, which was the second largest district in population and which reported only five blacksmith shops, there appears to be a direct relationship between the size of the population in the district and the number of blacksmith shops. For example, Coosawattee, Chattooga, and Chickamauga districts, which were three of the four largest regions in population, reported the greatest numbers of blacksmith shops.[168]

As mentioned earlier, the 1840 manufactures census experienced problems with collection of data. The 1810 and 1820 manufactures censuses had so many problems with data collection that the federal government decided not to conduct an 1830 manufactures census. After an examination of the 1840 through 1860 censuses to determine their accuracy and potential use in this dissertation, a decision was made to use only certain categories from particular censuses because of continued problems in reporting. For example, the iron statistics for 1840 appear to be more complete and useful than for 1850. In general, the statistics below for 1840 iron manufacture, and all following manufactures census reports, should be reviewed with the idea that many of the figures are low.

In 1840, of the states that acquired control of land from the Cherokees in 1838, Tennessee reported the largest production of both cast iron and bar iron. The state reported

[168] Legislature of Cherokee Nation, "Census of 1824," *Cherokee Phoenix*, 18 June 1828.

$1,514,736 in capital invested in the iron industry with 34 furnaces producing 16,128.5 tons of cast iron and 99 bloomeries, forges, and rolling mills and 9,673 tons of bar iron produced. The production of both bar and cast iron was spread across the state, with all three sections —East, Middle, and West — reporting iron production. By 1840, the iron industry in the areas recently ceded by the Cherokees had not taken off. None of the counties that were created based on the 1835 treaty reported iron production in 1840. However, many other former Cherokee counties did. For example, Meigs County, created from lands ceded in 1819, reported twenty-two tons of bar iron produced. Blount County, created from lands ceded by three treaties and discussed in the previous chapter, reported 1,030 tons of bar iron produced. Carter reported 494 tons of cast iron and 357 tons of bar iron produced. The Middle District of Tennessee out-produced both East and West Tennessee in both cast and bar iron. North Carolina reported $94,961 in capital invested in the iron industry with 8 furnaces producing 968 tons of cast iron and 43 bloomeries, forges, and rolling mills and 963 tons of bar iron produced. The county of Cherokee in North Carolina, created from land ceded in the 1835 treaty, did not report any iron production. Georgia reported $24,000 in capital invested in the iron industry with 14 furnaces producing 494 tons of cast iron and 29 bloomeries, forges, and rolling mills (the figures for tons of bar iron produced are missing). Carroll County, which was located just outside the Cherokee Nation and was better known for its gold mining, reported 4 furnaces which produced 54 tons of cast iron. Another gold county, Habersham, which was created from Cherokee lands, reported one furnace that produced 129 pounds of cast iron. Alabama reported $9,500 in capital invested in the iron industry with 1 furnace producing 30 tons of cast iron and 5 bloomeries, forges, and rolling mills and 75 tons of bar iron produced. The former Cherokee country state of Kentucky also reported a

large iron industry that year, one that rivaled neighboring Tennessee. Kentucky reported $449,000 in capital invested in the iron industry with 17 furnaces producing 29,206 tons of cast iron and 13 bloomeries, forges, and rolling mills and 3,637 tons of bar iron produced.[169]

Despite the demand for iron in the South, including former Cherokee country, the South greatly lagged behind the North in iron production. For example, Pennsylvania led the country in iron production with $7,781,471 capital invested in the industry, 213 furnaces producing 98,395 tons of cast iron and 169 bloomeries, forges, and rolling mills and 87,244 tons of bar iron produced.[170]

The low grade of iron ore found in many parts of the Southern Appalachians contributed to a decline in the manufacture of pig iron in the 1840s. The cost of transportation to ship iron out of the mountains and costs associated with operating the forges, including the cost of charcoal, prevented the small forges in former Cherokee counties from being able to compete with ironworks outside the area. Iron mining in former Cherokee lands did continue, however. For example, William Holland Thomas owned his own bloomery forges near Quallatown and he shipped wagonloads of iron from his forges and other western North Carolina forges to markets in South Carolina and Georgia.[171]

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Euro-Americans moving into Cherokee country sought out local sources of iron, just as they had sought out local sources of salt and saltpeter. As a result, a thriving industry in iron production grew and produced enough iron to begin shipping it to distant markets. Although the market for Southern Appalachian iron

---

[169] *Sixth Census: 1840*, 178, 202, 214, 250, 262, 358.
[170] *Sixth Census: 1840,* 358.
[171] Pierce, *The Great Smokies,* 16.

began to dry up around 1840, the Anglo-Americans who moved into Cherokee lands probably did not anticipate the future drop in the market, just as the gold-seekers in North Georgia did not anticipate the drop in production of gold that occurred in the 1840s. In the case of iron, therefore, the 1840 census records do not reflect the desire by whites to own the abundant iron resources in the Cherokee Nation before the 1838 removal, but their efforts to establish mines, forges, and blacksmith shops and their efforts to import and export iron into the region did.

Gold and Quartz

Many early travelers in Cherokee country recorded observations of the mineral riches of the region and how the Cherokees utilized them. One such visitor, Lt. Henry Timberlake, was a soldier from Virginia who spent several months in the Overhill villages in present-day Tennessee in 1761-62. In Timberlake's journal, published several years after his visit, he reported that the Cherokee "mountains contain very rich mines of gold, silver, lead, and copper, as may be evinced by several accidentally found out by the Indians, and lumps of valuable ore washed down by several of the streams, a bag of which sold in Virginia at a considerable price; and by the many salt springs, it is probable there are many mines of that likewise, as well as of other minerals." Myths about Cherokee and Spanish gold and silver mines in the Southern Appalachians have persisted for decades. Writing in the late nineteenth century, ethnologist James Mooney reported that evidence of abandoned mines in the Cherokee homelands suggested proof that Spanish expeditions had dug for gold in the southern mountains. The historical record and archaeological investigations, however, have not supported these old myths of ancient Spanish gold mines in Cherokee territory. Timberlake may have observed a few samples of gold

nuggets collected from nearby streams and some copper ornamentation, but he did not report visiting actual mines.[172]

Timberlake reported that the Cherokee lands contained "many beautiful stones of different colours, many of which, I am apt to believe, are of great value." He also recorded that the Cherokees used these colorful stones in conjuring ceremonies. While emeralds, rubies, and diamonds have been found in western North Carolina near Franklin, there is no archaeological or historical evidence to support the idea that the Cherokees systematically mined these gems or possessed them in large quantities. Timberlake may have confused clear and colorful quartz crystals for diamonds or other precious gems. Quartz crystals, believed to hold a number of sacred powers, were, and still are, used by Cherokees for a number of purposes, including divination.[173]

The most highly prized and sacred of all crystals, the *ulunsuti,* was obtained from the head of the great *uktena* serpent. Timberlake, and many years later ethnologist James Mooney, recorded the story of how Cherokee warriors attacked the giant serpent in an attempt to obtain its magic crystal, but without success. At last, one clever fellow named *Aganunitsi* donned a suit of leather, surprised and killed the *uktena,* and captured the crystal. The warrior hid the *ulunsuti* for many years. Writing in the late nineteenth century, ethnologist James Mooney reported that "the East Cherokee still keep the one which he brought. It is like a large transparent crystal, nearly the

---

[172] Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 24. It is not my intention to explore these old myths in detail. Many historians and popular writers have written about DeSoto's quest for gold among the Cherokees and other less documented tales of ancient gold mines among the Cherokee mountains. For more information on the DeSoto explorations and discussions of ancient mines in the Southern Appalachians, see Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas*, 26-29 and David Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush*, 7-11.

[173] Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 24.

shape of a cartridge bullet, with a blood-red streak running through the center from top to bottom. The owner keeps it wrapped in a whole deerskin, inside an earthen jar hidden away in a secret cave in the mountains." The blood crystal brings success in rainmaking, hunting, and romance to whomever possesses it. The crystal is also used for prophecy and is consulted to learn if a warrior will survive a battle or if a sick person will die. The stories of the *uktena* and the *ulunsuti* that Timberlake and Mooney recorded varied slightly in detail, but not in spirit. Timberlake believed that the large *ulunsuti* crystal probably existed and was in the possession of a Cherokee conjuror. Over one hundred years later, Mooney confirmed that it was still in the possession of the Eastern Band.[174]

Quartz is an abundant stone in the Southern Appalachians and is found in many variations and colors. Mooney believed that the sacred *ulunsuti* was a common rutile quartz, as opposed to a diamond. The Cherokees owned and used other types of quartz crystals which they considered to be of inferior quality to the *ulunsuti* and which they believed came from the scales of the *uktena*. While the Cherokees valued it as a powerful stone with magic powers, white settlers did not. This contrast in appreciation for beautiful quartz crystals is apparent in one of the stories about the *ulunsuti* that Mooney recorded:[175]

> At the creation an *ulunsuti* was given to the white man, and a piece of silver to the Indian. But the white man despised the stone and threw it away, while the Indian did the same with the silver. In going about the white man afterward found the silver piece and put it into his pocket and has prized it ever since.

[174] Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 24; Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas,* 297-98.
[175] Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas,* 350-51, 458-61, n.50.

> The Indian, in like manner, found the *ulunsuti* where the white man had thrown it. He picked it up and has kept it since as his talisman, as money is the talismanic power of the white man.[176]

Discovery of Gold in North Carolina

The first documented discovery of gold in North America occurred in 1799 on the North Carolina property of a German immigrant named John Reed. Reed was born Johannes Ried or Rieth sometime between 1757 and 1759 in the province of Hesse-Cassel northeast of Frankfurt. He arrived in America in 1778 as a replacement soldier for a Hessian regiment fighting on the side of the British. Reed deserted in 1782 and made his way with other Hessian deserters to a settlement of Germans in Cabarrus County where he worked as a farm hand, then used his earnings to begin acquiring land.[177]

One Sunday in the spring of 1799, two of Reed's children skipped church to go fishing and spied a gold rock about the size of a flat iron in the creek. The son showed the colorful rock to his father, but not recognizing it as gold, Reed employed it as a doorstop. Three years later, Reed took it to a jeweler who identified it as gold, fluxed it into a bar, and offered to buy it. Still not understanding its value, Reed asked for $3.50. The jeweler could not resist the purchase, because the gold was actually worth somewhere between $3,500 and $8,000. Reed later realized his mistake and was able to recover about $1,000 from the jeweler. Reed and his family began hunting for more rocks along the stream and soon found enough nuggets to purchase slaves that

---

[176] Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas,* 350-51.
[177] Richard F. Knapp, *Golden Promise in the Piedmont: The Story of John Reed's Mine* (Raleigh: Historic Sites, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1999), 3-6; Green, "Gold Mining," 7.

he put to work digging for more gold. Reed's operations were crude and consisted mainly of digging near the surface of the creek for larger stones and panning for smaller ones. Despite the primitive methods used, by 1824, the Reed mine had produced an estimated one hundred thousand dollars in gold.[178]

About 1804, word of Reed's discovery began to spread and other small gold mining operations developed. By 1807, parties in Massachusetts and Maryland became interested in investing in the North Carolina gold mines. After word reached Washington, William Thornton, the designer of the United States Capitol building, tried to organize a stock company to invest in a 35,000-acre mine in the area. Although his plans fell through, a number of other gold mines such as the Rudisill, Capps, St Catherine's, and McCombs mines in Mecklenberg, Cabarrus, and neighboring counties were more successful.[179]

In 1821, North Carolina became the first state to sponsor a geologic survey. Denison Olmsted, a professor of chemistry, geology, and mineralogy at the University of North Carolina, led the study. At the time of the survey, the known gold region in North Carolina covered an area of approximately 1000 square miles in Montgomery, Cabarrus, and Anson counties. Olmsted described the gold as lying in a thin layer of gravel and mud which was a pale blue or sometimes yellow color. Gold fields were rented out to prospectors at the rate of one-fourth to one-half the value of the yield. When Olmsted revisited the North Carolina gold region in 1824, no new gold fields had been discovered and gold was thought to still be confined to the area defined in his first report. By the time his report was published in 1825, new gold fields had been discovered in

[178] Knapp, *Golden Promise,* 7-9: Green, "Gold Mining," 7.
[179] Knapp, *Golden Promise,* 9-11; Green, "Gold Mining", 8.

Mecklenberg County, but Olmstead and Charles Rothe, who travelled with him, still believed that the gold region was limited to North Carolina.[180]

In 1825, Matthias Barringer of Montgomery County made an important discovery that significantly changed United States gold mining. Barringer realized that gold was found in veins of quartz and was the first person to follow an exposed vein underground. Miners became bolder, dug deeper pits, then transformed pits into reinforced shafts and tunnels. In 1826, Charles E. Rothe, a mining engineer from Saxony, made a survey of North Carolina and reported that more veins of quartz and iron ore containing gold had been found and that a sustained scientific search for additional veins was warranted. Systematic searches following veins yielded new gold discoveries and experienced miners and engineers began to flock to the region to join the many unskilled miners already there. The opening of new and deeper vein mines required skilled mechanics who could operate the new machines that were invented to access the underground veins through shafts. The burgeoning gold industry also encouraged the invention of new machines to process the gold.[181]

The realization that large amounts of gold lay hidden in veins of quartz throughout the region sparked a bonafide gold rush to the North Carolina fields beginning in 1825. Boom towns

---

[180] Daniels, *American Science*, 219; Henry B. C. Nitze and H. A. J. Wilkens, *Gold Mining in North Carolina and Adjacent South Appalachian Regions: Bulletin No. 10* (Raleigh, North Carolina, Guy V. Barnes, Public Printer, 1897), 28; Denison Olmstead, "Report on the Geology of North Carolina, Conducted under the Direction of the Board of Agriculture, Part 1" November 1824, in a bound volume titled *North Carolina Miscellanie*, n.d., no publisher, but probably Gales and Seaton, 30-39; Denison Olmstead, "Report on the Geology of North Carolina conducted under the Direction of the Board of Agriculture, Part 2," November 1825, in a bound volume titled *North Carolina Miscellanie*, n.d., no publisher, but probably Gales and Seaton, 106-109.

[181] Linda Funk, *Reed Gold Mine Guidebook* (Raleigh: Historic Sites, Division of Archives and History, 1979), 5; Green, "Gold Mining," 10-11, 13.

grew up at Charlotte, Gold Hill, Brindletown, Washington, and other locations. Charlotte became the center of the gold region. The number of miners in these towns ranged from 600 to 5,000, including many foreign workers and foreign owners. Portuguese, Hungarians, Germans, Swiss, Mexicans, Turks, Scots, Irish, Welsh, and other nationalities outnumbered American laborers. In one mine, thirteen different languages were spoken. Mining was an industry that was still in its infancy in the United States; therefore some mines recruited engineers trained in Europe to obtain the expertise they needed to dig shafts and develop machinery. Several American owners went abroad to study mining. One example is Humphrey Bissell, who studied at Swansea and Frieburg and returned with a German engineer to operate his mine. Vincent Rivifinoli, an Italian with experience in mines in South America, was hired to supervise the English Gold Mining Company, but his inability to supervise negroes and southern whites resulted in his dismissal.[182]

Although gold had not yet been discovered in Cherokee country, on October 31, 1825, the Cherokees enacted a law that declared that any "gold, silver, lead, copper or brass mines, which may be found within the limits of the Cherokee Nation, shall be the public property of the Cherokee Nation." The law also stated that "should the legislative Council deem it profitable and expedient, to have such mine or mines worked, then, in that case, the discoverer or discoverers shall be entitled to receive one fourth of the nett [sic] proceeds arising from such minerals." What inspired the Cherokees at this time to take these steps to assert their rights over their mineral resources is a puzzle. The action may have been in response to the fact that scientists had confirmed that gold was found in veins of quartz and iron. The Cherokees knew that their mountains were rich in both quartz and iron and may have been anticipating that gold would

[182] Green, "Gold Mining," 10, 14-15, 135; "The Gold Mines of North Carolina," *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review* 11 (July 1844):65.

eventually be found inside their borders. They may have intended it as a preemptive strike against illegal trespassers who might begin to search for gold in their mountains. It is also possible that the Cherokees had already found small quantities of gold in their stream beds and had managed to keep it secret. Whatever caused the Cherokees to pass the law in 1825, it would prove to be ineffective when gold was finally discovered by non-Cherokee citizens in the North Georgia mountains a few year later.[183]

Discovery of Gold in Georgia

Several stories of independent gold discoveries in the North Georgia mountains exist. In one version of the first gold found in Georgia, a man named Logan and one of his slaves were returning from the gold region of North Carolina when the slave decided to test some soil in Nacoochee Valley. The slave believed that the Georgia dirt resembled the soil in the gold fields they had just left. The test proved positive for gold content. Another claim to the first discovery of gold in North Georgia belonged to Jesse Hogan from North Carolina, who found some nuggets in a creek near Dahlonega. About the same time as Logan and Hogan's discoveries, Thomas Bowen and John Witheroods made independent finds on Duke's Creek and a black miner found gold on Bear Creek. The story which has received the most attention is that of Benjamin Parks, who found a nugget in 1827 or 1828 on the east side of the Chestatee River in what was then Hall County. In Parks's account of the discovery, he was returning from the western side of the Chestatee where he kept a lick log of salt for his livestock, when he stumbled across a bright yellow stone. Regardless of which story is the true first discovery of gold in the

[183] Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 50.

Georgia mountains, a fire storm of events was set in motion as would-be prospectors invaded the Cherokee mountains.[184]

In the fall of 1829, newspapers began printing reports of the discovery of gold in the Cherokee mountains, but word had already spread. According to some estimates, by June 1829 the number of gold-seekers flooding into the region had reached three thousand. By June 1830, the *Niles Register* reported that the number had grown to four thousand. *Niles* also reported that ten thousand dollars' worth of gold was being collected from Yahoola Creek every day.[185]

In October 1829, William Holland Thomas, a trader and resident of Quallatown in Cherokee North Carolina, travelled to Georgia to investigate possible gold mining opportunities. He was joined by prominent Carolina Cherokees Junaluska and Willnotah. On the six-day trip to New Echota, Thomas conducted tests to see if gold was present along the route they travelled. On October 15, he attended the Council at New Echota and read the 1827 Constitution of the Cherokee Nation. He also learned of the 1825 law that stated that all mines belonged to the Nation and that individuals did not have a right to work them without national dispensation. Thomas was disappointed that he was not allowed to hunt mines in the Cherokee Nation and tried to persuade several councilmen to have the law changed. The point soon became moot,

---

[184] Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush*, 7, 21-22. Williams favors the claim by Parks as the first discovery of gold near Dahlonega. For a full discussion of the inconsistencies in all of the claims, including Parks's claim, see Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush*, 7, 21-25.

[185] *Niles Weekly Register*, 5 June 1830; Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush,* 25, 28; "Assay Offices, Gold Districts, North Carolina and Georgia, etc., To Accompany Bill H. R. No. 84, Report No. 39," 22d Congress, U. S. House of Representatives, 22 December 1831, 27; James W. Covington, ed., "Letters from the Georgia Gold Regions," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (Dec. 1955): 402.

however, when Georgia extended her declaration of sovereignty over the gold mines the following year.[186]

In September 1830, Major Phillip Wager wrote to Major General Alexander Macomb complaining of the quality of the people who had descended on Cherokee country looking for gold. Among the hopefuls listed by Wager were peddlers, gamblers, thieves, two ministers, two candidates for the state legislature, and two colonels in the Georgia militia. According to the major, the lure of gold attracted all ages and all races of adventurers, including Cherokees, whites, blacks, and mixed-bloods. The Cherokees were also concerned about the types of people that had invaded their lands. John Ross described them as "some of the most vicious and base characters that the adjoining states can produce, who are very active in annoying our citizens, by stealing from them horses and other property."[187]

In the summer of 1830, the federal government sent troops to the Cherokee Nation to arrest and expel white miners who had settled on Cherokee lands illegally. Mining operations in Georgia were suspended for approximately a month, then resumed for several weeks, then halted again in early September due to the continued presence of the federal troops. White men who were already living in the Cherokee Nation as well as Cherokees moved in to take control of the abandoned mines. B. L. Goodman, one of the expelled miners, wrote to Governor Gilmer expressing his dismay over the situation: "Perhaps you have not known in the course of your useful life such a spirit of indignation that exists here. Those who have been compelled to

---

[186] E. Stanley Godbold, Jr. and Mattie U. Russell, *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 18-19.
[187] Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush*, 26, 130n28; John Ross's Annual Message, 11 October 1830, in Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross* 1: 201-203.

decline the gold business are in the habit of going over on the branches where they discover the white men of the [Cherokee] nation engaged in working the lots which they have paid their money for, which provokes them much and the hue and cry with them is that if the State of Georgia does not prevent the Indians from digging that they will. It is feared that mobs may be got up that may cause blood shed."[188]

Another eyewitness to the arrival of the U. S. troops at the Georgia mines, Peter Williams, delivered Goodman's letter to Gilmer and included one of his own:

> I was at the gold mines in the Cherokee nation previous to and at the same time the United States Troops arrived there. The day previous to the arrival of the Troops there was considerable excitement amongst the gold diggers, some declaring they would not leave the mines at all — others of better information persuading them it was better to go away peacefully. On the arrival of the U. S. troops the officer commanding the Detachment, Capt. Brady, issued his orders and gave them a few days to get their property away previous to his having their huts burnt every man I believe would have left the country immediately but on the second day after the arrival of the Troops the Indians and the White Men who lived in the Nation flocked in and took charge of the mine, that the Intruders had just left. This was sufficient to rouse all the unpleasant feeling that had just been put down by men of Influence and standing among these people. The Intruders

[188] B. L. Goodman to George Gilmer, 7 June 1830, in James W. Covington, ed. "Letters from the Georgia Gold Regions," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (Dec. 1955): 402-3; "Assay Offices, Gold Districts, North Carolina and Georgia, etc., To Accompany Bill H. R. No. 84, Report No. 39," 22d Congress, U. S. House of Representatives, 22 December 1831, 27.

left the mines swearing vengeance against the Indians and Whites who had taken charge of mines they opened. On my return home I met several persons going back to the mines stating they had as much right to dig as the white men in the [Cherokee] Nation and that they would do so unless stopped by the executive power of Georgia.[189]

The federal troops were effective in removing many of the white gold miners from Cherokee lands in Georgia, but in the process, they also removed many of the Cherokee miners. In November 1830, Ross complained to Agent Hugh Montgomery of the confusion that existed in the Nation with regard to the mines:

> In the removal of the white intruders from the gold mines the Cherokees who were engaged in the mining business were also ordered to desist, and were in part treated as intruders, and upon being told that the prohibition was only intended a temporary suspension, for the more effectual removal of the whites, the Cherokees all quietly and peaceable [sic] agreed to comply with the orders of the President. It is now stated that the troops are about to be recalled from the nation, that the protection of the Cherokees is to be transferred to the Government of Georgia. This extraordinary movement, if true, is astonishingly strange, especially when it is known that the intruders on the frontiers of the other adjoining States

[189] Peter J. Williams to George Gilmer, 17 June 1830, Covington, "Letters from the Georgia Gold Regions," 403-404.

are unremoved & that the Cherokee nation is by treaty acknowledged *to be under the protection of the United States exclusively*.[190]

Many Georgians were outraged at the presence of federal troops on what they considered to be sovereign state soil, and even more outraged that Georgia citizens had been arrested. Governor George Gilmer sent a letter to Secretary of War John Eaton informing him that a judge named Clayton had honored a writ of Habeus Corpus for the release of people arrested by the federal troops. Judge Clayton was upset that honest citizens of Hall County had been arrested by federal troops, paraded through town, then marched sixty miles in public disgrace. Some of these upstanding citizens had defended Georgia in the War of 1812 and did not deserve the treatment received from a federal government who had no legal right to station troops on state soil.[191]

Governor Gilmer responded to the chaotic situation in the gold region in June of 1830 when he appointed Colonel Yelverton P. King as Superintendent of Gold and Silver Mines in Cherokee Territory. Gilmer declared that the state owned the mines and ordered King to do whatever "may be necessary to protect the public property." King was told to stop all digging and to be kind to the "poor and ignorant Indian natives." If anyone failed to comply with the orders to desist digging, King should apply to the Superior Court for a writ to stop. Gilmer forwarded a copy of his orders for King to Andrew Jackson through the Secretary of War with the wishes that the President would honor the state's position of sovereignty over the mines. In a separate letter, Gilmer confided to King that he was concerned that the state's seizure of the

[190] John Ross to Hugh Montgomery, 25 November 1830, in Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 208.
[191] George Gilmer to John H. Eaton, 24 June 1830, NARA, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M-221, Roll 110.

mines could precipitate a court challenge: "It is highly probable that the first effort to resist the authority of Georgia will be by an endeavour to secure to the Indians the gold mines – with the possession of this source of wealth, and the determination of the United States to resist our taking possession of the territory, the removal of the Cherokee may be delayed a great while. The enforcement of the rights of the state to the gold in the lands occupied by the Cherokees, through the jurisdiction of the courts is therefore the question upon which most probably the contest is to commence between the State and the Cherokee and their Allies." Gilmer also expressed his fears to Jackson about the possible return of the gold mines to the Cherokees: "It is believed that if the Indians are permitted to take possession of the gold mines through the assistance of the U. States government, that instead of being removed, they will become fixed upon the soil of Georgia."[192]

Federal troops were removed from Georgia only a few months after they were sent. In response, Georgia authorized the governor to organize a group of sixty men to protect the mines and to restore order to Cherokee country. Their presence reinforced the state's declaration of sovereignty over Cherokee lands. The guard was not effective in keeping intruders off of the land and often intimidated the Cherokees who had not fled across state lines. Once again, the Cherokees turned to the federal government for protection. They wrote to the President and to Indian agent Hugh Montgomery seeking relief from the intruders and the government of Georgia. Jackson responded that he had no power to intervene or to oppose the exercise of sovereignty of Georgia over its own lands. Ross complained to Montgomery that former treaties

[192] Executive Order by the Governor of Georgia, 18 June 1830, and Instructions to Colonel Yelverton P. King, June 1830, NARA, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M-221, Roll 110; George R. Gilmer to Yelverton P. King, 21 June 1830, Governor's Letterbooks, Georgia State Archives; George Gilmer to Andrew Jackson, 15 June 1830, Governor's Letterbooks, Georgia State Archives. The 1etter from Gilmer to Jackson is reproduced in Volume 8 of *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, (see pages 184-87), but shows the date of 17 June 1830.

had acknowledged the Cherokees as a separate nation and that the 11th article of the 1791 treaty of Holston stated that Cherokee lands were not "within the jurisdiction of any state" nor "within the jurisdiction of any of the Territorial Districts of the United States." Ross's appeals to Montgomery and Jackson fell on deaf ears. Montgomery was not in a position to be able to assist the Cherokees. In the end, the Cherokees turned to the courts seeking relief. They asked Daniel Webster to take up their case, but he declined. William Wirt agreed to take their case which went to the United States Supreme Court. The Cherokees asked that the laws of Georgia that extended sovereignty over the Cherokees be declared null and void. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, the Supreme Court declared that it had no jurisdiction in the case because the Cherokees were a dependent nation of the United States. This ruling was a hollow victory because although the court recognized the Cherokees as a nation, neither Georgia or the federal government changed their course of action toward the Cherokees.[193]

Back in North Carolina, a number of foreign investors had grown displeased with the resentment shown towards foreigners. The state levied higher taxes on foreign investors and many American laborers refused to work for European managers or owners. Disturbances took place between foreign and native workers. These pressures, and a desire for larger profits, encouraged several mine owners and many laborers to investigate the possibility of working mines in Cherokee country.[194]

In November 1831, Robert Love of North Carolina wrote President Jackson asking permission to dig for gold in Cherokee country. Love was a member of a prominent western

[193] Coulter, *Auraria*, 4; John Ross to Hugh Montgomery, 20 July 1830, in Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 193-95; William Wirt to John Ross, 22 September 1830, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 199-200.
[194] Green, "Gold Mining," 135-36.

North Carolina family and a former resident of northeast Tennessee. During the American Revolution, he fought against the Chickamauga Cherokees while he was stationed at White's Fort (present-day Knoxville, Tennessee), and was stationed at Fort Robertson on the Clinch River and Fort Henry on the Long Island of the Holston. He moved to the Cherokee country of western North Carolina in 1788 to an area that would become Buncombe County in 1791 and later Haywood County in 1808. He helped establish the county of Haywood in 1808, donated land for the courthouse, jail, and a public square, and served as its first Clerk of the Court. He is also credited for naming the town of Waynesville. Love was one of the commissioners who surveyed the boundary line between Tennessee and North Carolina in 1821. In the 1830s, he became an agent for John Gray Blount who speculated in large tracts of land in western North Carolina. He served in the state legislature in both the House of Commons and the Senate while his brother Thomas Love served as a state legislator for twenty years. Love was as an elector for President for Thomas Jefferson, then served for many years as an elector for Andrew Jackson.[195]

Love wrote his old friend Jackson of his need to expand his business dealings to include gold mining in the Cherokee lands: "My worthy friend the object of this Letter is to crave your friendly permission to dig for Gold in the Cherokee Country — I have three Sons & as many Son in laws living not far distant from me, and we can spare among us forty strong and active hands & still retain a force sufficient to make our bread, and that is all we can do in a country like ours where we cannot grow Cotton or Tobacco, our employment being as the old saying is we can

[195] W. C. Allen, *The Annals of Haywood County, North Carolina: Historical Sociological, Biographical, and Genealogical,* 1935 (Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1977), 35, 38, 39, 108-109, 111, 114-15; John Preston Arthur, *Western North Carolina: A History, from 1730 to 1913* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1914, Published by the Edward Buncombe Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution of Asheville, NC.), 138-39.

make plenty of Hog and Hominy, and then sit down and eat it." One of these sons was James R. Love, who partnered with his father in speculation in mountain lands. Like his father and uncle, he served in the North Carolina state legislature. Also like his father, James became a staunch supporter of railroads and internal improvements. He gave rights of way through his land for the building of a railroad, and the first depot in Haywood County was built on his land. James's oldest son, James Coman Love, was a contractor on the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad. The senior James's oldest daughter, Sarah Jane Burney, married Colonel William Holland Thomas, the prominent agent for the Qualla Cherokees and U. S. Senator.[196]

Jackson replied to Love that if it were in his power to grant him permission to operate mines in the Cherokee country, that he would gladly do so. But the President explained that the federal government did not have the right to control ownership and access to lands in Georgia because the state owned them in fee simple, and had never given up her sovereignty to her lands despite Indian occupation. "In this respect Georgia is not in the same situation with Alabama and some of the other states who have derived their titles from the United States who still retain the fee simple of the lands yet unsold, and who of course could work the mines as the proprietors of lands in No. Carolina and elsewhere now do." Jackson's reply to Love sheds light on his rationale for pulling federal troops from Cherokee Georgia and for his decision not to oppose Georgia's extension of her sovereignty over the Cherokees. Although Jackson could not help his old friend with his mining ambitions, the following year the President found another way to help him: he appointed Love to be the surveyor of the boundary line between the United

[196] Robert Love to Andrew Jackson, 17 November 1831, "Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, "Unpublished Letters of North Carolinians," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 14:377-78; Allen, *The Annals of Haywood County,* 122-23.

States and Mexico. Love, like many white males in the South, always looked for opportunities. And like many other southerners, he sought opportunities in the Cherokee Nation and would later become actively involved in Cherokee removal. In 1838, Love was responsible for notifying Governor Edward B. Dudley of Haywood County's decision to call up the militia in preparation for the roundup. A later chapter on transportation and internal improvements will introduce other men like Love who were involved in both railroads and Indian removal.[197]

More Gold Discoveries in the Cherokee Nation

The discovery of gold in North Georgia inspired whites to look for gold elsewhere in Cherokee country. The first discovery of gold in Alabama was made in 1830 near the Tennessee River in northeast Alabama on Cherokee land. Indian Superintendent Thomas L. McKenney wrote Secretary of War John Eaton on March 31 that numerous gold seekers had moved into the Creek Path Valley and were disturbing the Cherokees. That same year, placer gold was discovered on Coqua Creek, also called Coco or Coker Creek, in what is now Monroe County, Tennessee. Coqua Creek was on Cherokee land near the intersection of the Unicoi Trail and the Great Indian War Path.[198]

By 1832, gold seekers had descended on Cherokee lands in western North Carolina in what is now Cherokee County. Whites mined gold illegally along the Valley River and

---

[197] Robert Love to Andrew Jackson, 1 September, 1832, Library of Congress, Andrew Jackson Papers; Robert Love to Edward B. Dudley, 19 March 1838, Governor Edward B. Dudley's *Letterbook*, GLB 32, 170-71; Andrew Jackson to Robert Love, 10 December 1831, *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson,* John Spencer Bassett, ed., 7 vols., 1926-1935 (Reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 4:382.

[198] Thomas L. McKenney to John Eaton, 31 March 1830, NARA, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M-221, Roll 110; W. S. Yeates, *A Preliminary Report on a Part of the Gold Deposits of Georgia* (Geological Survey of Georgia, 1896), 29.

Cherokees worked a mine at Cheoah Mountain. Writing in January 1833, James Whitaker complained to Governor David L. Swain that over a thousand intruders from the adjacent states of Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee had descended on the Valley River and were committing depredations on Cherokee lands. The illegal intruders were "destroying the face of the soil, cutting down and killing all the valuable timber and what is worse than all are [depriving] the natives and white citizens of all the benefits to be derived from the gold mines." An unidentified man was overheard to say that he would give the state of North Carolina $50,000 for the rights to mine one half mile of the Valley River bed. That same gentleman was in the process of cutting a canal for the purpose of redirecting the river water and exposing the bed of the river in order to dig for gold. Joel [Tammoy?] of Wilkesboro believed that the gold found on the Valley River was the richest cache of gold in the United Sates and appealed to the governor for protection of his operation and against intrusions by other whites. He predicted that the number of intruders would double when spring arrived. Joel also reported that there were hundreds of men seeking gold on Coqua Creek in Tennessee. He complained that the lands around Coqua Creek in Tennessee and Valley River in North Carolina were not protected while the lands in Georgia were. Guards employed by the state protected the Georgia gold lands. He appealed to Governor Swain to establish a guard for the mines in North Carolina and recommended that a local citizen, Major William C. Emmett, be appointed to establish a guard because he had spent several years among the Cherokees and was familiar with their character.[199]

[199] James Whitaker to Governor D. L. Swain, 22 March 1833, Governors' Papers of David Lowrey Swain, G. P. 66, North Carolina State Archives; Joel Tammoy? to Governor D. L. Swain, 29 January 1833, Governors' Papers of David Lowrey Swain, G. P. 66, North Carolina State Archives.

Swain wrote to Secretary of War Lewis Cass to request that he send federal troops to North Carolina to protect the gold fields from illegal intruders. General Winfield Scott, who directed the Cherokee removal five years later, ordered two companies of artillery from Charleston Harbor to go to the Valleytown area to remove intruders. The United States 2d Artillery under the command of Captain George W. Gardner was sent to Camp Armistead, located on the Unicoi Road on the Tennessee side of the mountains, to protect the main access road from Tennessee to the Cherokee country in North Carolina. While in North Carolina, Gardner received his orders regarding intruders from Swain instead of from General Scott.[200]

Interest in the southern gold industry spread beyond the region and attracted the attention of both professional and lay geologists and scientists. The January 1833 issue of Benjamin Silliman's *American Journal of Science and Arts* published a survey of the gold region in Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina that was conducted by Tennessee Supreme Court Judge Jacob Peck. An amateur geologist, Peck was also known for his mathematical skills and his ability to draw maps. Peck explained in the article that gold was found in veins of quartz that lay parallel to formations of hornblende slate that run in a northeast to southwest direction from Burke County, North Carolina through Cherokee country and ending in Alabama. Other valuable minerals could be found in the same region, including copper, which Peck found in Rabun County, lead, which he found in Habersham County, iron, oxide of titanium, garnets, tourmaline, zircon, and silver, which was discovered at the gold mine at New Potosi on the Chestatee River.

---

[200] Lewis Cass to Governor D. L. Swain, 26 February 1833, Governors' Papers of David Lowrey Swain, G. P. 66, North Carolina State Archives; General Alexander MaComb to Governor D. L. Swain, 14 March 1833, Governors' Papers of David Lowrey Swain, G. P. 66, North Carolina State Archives; Winfield Scott to Governor D. L. Swain, 22 March 1833, Governors' Papers of David Lowrey Swain, G. P. 66, North Carolina State Archives.

Peck's description of the gold mine area in the Cherokee Nation in East Tennessee and southwestern North Carolina was one of the first to be published. The gold mines near Charlotte, North Carolina and in North Georgia were, by this time, well-known, but the gold mines in Cherokee North Carolina and Tennessee were not. To the rest of the nation, it now appeared that the gold deposits within the Cherokee Nation must be limitless. Peck described the Great Smoky Mountains range, already known for its iron, as having an abundance of quartz. He stated that "gold has been taken out of all the streams descending from [the range], on either side. Iron ore in many of its varieties, titanium, and native silver with the gold washed out at Coco creek, may be taken as favorable indications. . . . Coco creek is a very rich deposit, but as yet few deposits have been opened or washed." By the 1850s, Peck had turned his knowledge of the rich mineral deposits in Cherokee country into financial investments. He owned an interest in a mining-oriented hotel in Polk County and speculated in mineral rights.[201]

Peck's interest in science extended beyond geology and mathematics to include engineering. In 1836, after his term on the state Supreme Court was over, Peck contacted Tennessee Governor Newton Cannon to apply for an engineer's position on the section of the Charleston and Cincinnati Railroad planned for Tennessee and the Cherokee Nation. Peck, like many educated white southerners, saw how recent advances in science and technology, including the industries of mining and transportation, opened up new opportunities to tap the resources of the whole South, including those he described in the Cherokee Nation. As he explained in his

[201] Jacob Peck, " Geological and Mineralogical Account of the Mining Districts in the State of Georgia — Western Part of North Carolina and of East Tennessee, with a Map," *The American Journal of Science and Arts* 23: 4-7, 9-10; Jacob Peck to Newton Cannon, 10 December 1836, Governor Newton Cannon Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives; James X. Corgan, *Geology in Antebellum Tennessee*, Bulletin 85 (Nashville: State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Geology, 2002), 53.

essay on the mineral riches of the Cherokee Nation, "That science and enterprise should not have been awakened, to explore this whole region, may well be a matter of some surprise; mining however, is but just begun . . . ." The relationship between a new national interest in science and technology and the opening of Cherokee lands to white settlement is explored further in Chapter 5.[202]

John C. Calhoun's Georgia Gold Mine

One of the most prominent gold mine owners in Cherokee Georgia was John C. Calhoun. Clyde N. Wilson, an editor of *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, believes that Calhoun may have visited the Georgia gold region as early as 1828 while he was Vice President. We know that by September 1832, when his son Andrew Pickens purchased a gold mine in the Nacoochee Valley, Calhoun was looking at Cherokee country for investment opportunities. Calhoun's brother-in-law John Ewing Colhoun, Jr., also purchased gold properties in the Nacoochee Valley about the same time as his son. Andrew purchased the Obarr mine from a man named David Gibson, but sold it back to him after only a few months. After his failed attempts at gold mining, Andrew moved to Alabama where he became a planter. His father John later acquired the Obarr mine. The mine had a legally complex provenance, having changed hands several times in a few short years, but it was a prominent one. The Obarr mine was the site of one of the earliest discoveries of gold in Cherokee Georgia. When Benjamin Parks discovered gold near Dahlonega in 1828, the land belonged to his pastor, Robert O'Barr, minister at the Yellow Creek Baptist Church. Parks obtained a lease from O'Barr and began mining the land with help from his family. The

[202] Peck, "Geological and Mineralogical," 10.

lease for the mineral rights and the title later passed to John C. Calhoun. Parks would later tell the story, which appears to be unfounded, that shortly after selling his mineral rights lease to Calhoun, the senator struck a rich vein and found a nugget worth $24,000. Documents, however, show that Calhoun's first deposit of gold with the Philadelphia Mint was only $603.93. The more valuable find occurred nearly a decade later.[203]

During the first several years of Calhoun's ownership, the mine struggled financially. Although he complained frequently about the expenses associated with running the mine, his correspondence indicates that he hoped the mine would offset financial problems with his plantation in South Carolina. He used some of his own slaves to work the mine and asked his son-in-law Thomas G. Clemson, a trained engineer, to oversee operations for several years. Calhoun took an active interest in his Georgia gold mine and made the trip from his home in South Carolina to Dahlonega and Auraria nearly every summer beginning in 1833 and throughout his life. The trip to the mine, which was a horseback ride of about one hundred miles, provided an outlet for Calhoun's interest in science and technology. Calhoun continued to express personal interest in the mine and its operations and it remained in the family until after his death.[204]

---

[203] Wilson, "Introduction," The Papers of John C. Calhoun, 12:xl-xliii; Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush,* 22-24.

[204] John C. Calhoun to John R. Mathewes, 22 May 1842, in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun,* 16:254-55; Dixon H. Lewis to [Richard K. Cralle], 10 June 1842, in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun,*16:274-78; Introduction*, The Papers of John C. Calhoun,* 16:xxvi – xxvii; Introduction*,* Wilson, "Introduction," *The Papers of John C. Calhoun,* 12:xl-xli; Alester G. Holmes and George R. Sherrill, *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work* (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, Incorporated, 1937), 11, 17 .

Calhoun, Regional Newspapers, and Cherokee Removal

Calhoun's presence in the gold mine region of North Georgia caused quite a stir in Auraria's *Western Herald* in 1833, the first year that he visited. The paper described his long ride over the mountains from Pendleton and his stay at Grandma Paschal's tavern in Auraria. His interest in the mines generated a great deal of pride among locals and gave a sense of legitimacy to white occupation of Cherokee country. The editor of the *Western Herald*, Allen G. Fambrough, was a staunch states rights supporter and openly voiced his support of the concept of nullification and his political support of its architect, Calhoun. The paper's prospectus explained that the publishers were "disciples of the school of Jefferson, as taught in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions." As a supporter of Calhoun, Fambrough opposed Jackson's having sent federal troops to Cherokee country in 1830. Although Jackson withdrew federal troops from Georgia several years earlier and had acknowledged Georgia's sovereignty over Cherokee lands, many Aurarians still bitterly resented the fact that he had sent troops and had ejected whites from the mines. In April 1833, the *Western Herald* reported that a company of federal troops had passed through Athens en route to the gold fields. Fambrough did not speculate on their objective but hoped that they were on their way to Tennessee or North Carolina and voiced the opinion shared by many of his subscribers that they had "no use for them in Georgia."[205]

Shortly after the States Rights Party of Georgia was founded in Milledgeville in November 1833, enthusiastic leaders of Auraria voted to organize a local branch of the organization. They chose editor Fambrough to be one of their candidates for the state legislature. The States Rights Party, formerly called the Troup Party, opposed Jacksonian tyranny and

[205] Coulter, *Auraria*, 60-61, 86-87; Reprint of the prospectus of the *Western Herald* in the *Cherokee Intelligencer*, 1 March 1834.

attacked the President's followers in the Union Party, previously called the Clark Party. The States Rights Party, and the *Western Herald*, favored adopting the South Carolina test oath to be administered to office holders and militia in Georgia as an affirmation of state sovereignty.[206]

The *Miners Recorder and Spy in the West* began publication in Auraria several months after the *Western Herald* stopped publication. Milton H. Gathright, the editor, promised to devote the paper to the interests of the miners and pledged to publish articles by mineralogists on the different mineral strata of the region. The editor believed "that Federal encroachments should be guarded against with vigilance and repelled with promptness." However, Gathright disapproved of the extreme position of Calhoun and other states rights politicians in South Carolina and Georgia and promised to remain balanced in his reporting. In reality, the editor favored the Jacksonian Democrats and in the 1836 election, the paper declared its support for Martin Van Buren for President and Richard M. Johnson for Vice President. The paper did not last long in Auraria. As Dahlonega, the new county seat of Lumpkin, grew in importance, Auraria started to die. The *Miners Recorder,* like many Auraria businesses, moved to Dahlonega only a year after it began publication.[207]

The *Western Herald* and *The Miners Recorder and Spy in the West* were just two of the newspapers published in Cherokee country before the Trail of Tears. Others included the *Cherokee Intelligencer*, published in Etowah, and the *Georgia Pioneer* and *Cassville Gazette*, both published in Cassville. The editorial stances reflected the division among the new white

---

[206] Coulter, *Auraria*, 88, 92-93; *Western Herald*, 18 April 1834; *Western Herald*, 21 December 1833.

[207] Milton H. Gathright, Prospectus for *Miners Recorder and Spy in the West*, reprinted in *The Cherokee Intelligencer*, 8 March 1834; Coulter, *Auraria*, 108-109; *Miners Records and Spy in the West*, 22 October 1836.

residents of Cherokee country on party politics, particularly the issue of nullification. However, all supported the belief that Georgia had the right to declare her authority over the Cherokees and that Cherokee lands could best be managed by whites. They also believed in the necessity of state-supported internal improvements to promote commerce between the Cherokee region and surrounding areas. Regardless of how the papers felt about Jackson and Calhoun, they were united in their stand in support of private ownership and leasing of the gold mines. The papers regularly carried advertisements for the sale of lands in Cherokee territory. Speculators bought up the more valuable gold tracts and advertised them for sale in the local newspapers. The ownership of many of the gold tracts fell into dispute through lottery fraud or premature occupation of gold tracts still occupied by Cherokees. As a result, many tracts of land ended up in sheriff's sales which were listed in the local papers. The *Western Herald*, the *Miners Recorder*, and the other local papers ran many sheriff's and private ads for both gold and non-gold lots. The survival of the papers depended on the economic growth generated by white miners and the ads generated by property sales. In turn, the papers endorsed state politicians who pushed for extension of state jurisdiction of Indian lands and Cherokee removal.[208]

Calhoun used his position in the United States Senate to influence decisions that would benefit his gold mine business in North Georgia. One example is that in 1836, he proposed a resolution in the Senate to create a mail route from Pendleton to Dahlonega by way of Clarkesville and got the resolution sent to the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads. Calhoun spoke with Felix Grundy of Tennessee, the head of the committee, about the resolution. Grundy assured Calhoun that it would be taken care of, but when the act was drawn up, the

[208] *Cherokee Intelligencer*, 1 February 1834.

wording placed the mail route to Dahlonega from Greenville, South Carolina instead of from Pendleton. Calhoun believed the change was made by Jacksonian Democrats as a slam against him and called the "whole affair . . . a great outrage." Trying to calm the irate senator, Grundy told Calhoun that he thought that Postmaster General Amos Kendall could be convinced to have the route run from Pendleton because it was the more direct of the two routes. Apparently somewhat appeased by Grundy's comments, Calhoun expressed hope that the Jackson administration could be persuaded to make the change because of their weak standing in North Georgia and their desire to win votes in the region. He believed that they would not want to irritate Georgia voters on such a minor point, especially when a map would confirm that the Pendleton route was the direct one.[209]

The Dahlonega Mint

A large part of the raw gold mined in North Carolina and Georgia was used as a means of exchange. Nuggets were traded for property and to settle debts. It was difficult to determine the value of unprocessed gold, however, because of major variations in purity. Prior to 1838, most of the gold was turned into coin by private assayers and minters who provided some minimal standards for weighing and assessing the purity of gold. But as early as 1830, southern gold miners began to ask Congress to establish a branch mint in the southern gold region. They argued that counterfeiting had become commonplace and that transportation to the Philadelphia mint was too expensive and risky. Some gold speculators purchased North Carolina gold, which was less pure than Georgia gold, and sold it to dealers in Augusta, Georgia who sustained losses

[209] John C. Calhoun to John R. Mathewes, 7 May 1837, in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun,* 13:502-503.

when they transported it to Philadelphia for minting. After Congress initially rejected plans to build a branch of the U. S. Mint in North Carolina in 1831, the Bechtler family of Rutherford County, formerly of Baden, Germany, opened a large private mint. Although Congress authorized three new branch mints for Charlotte, Dahlonega, and New Orleans in 1835, the Bechtler mint, known for its honesty, continued to thrive. By 1840, the Bechtlers had coined the equivalent of over two million dollars in gold and their firm continued in operation until 1857.[210]

Although the Bechtler Mint was established in 1831, southern mine owners renewed their call for one or more branch mints. Congress responded by forming a committee to investigate the problem and in December 1833, a bill to establish assay offices in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia was drawn up. The director of the federal mint recommended instead, that the bill be changed to establish four branch mints. The House passed the revised bill by a vote of 115 to 60; however, it met with considerable resistance in the Senate based on sectional opposition. The South and West supported the measure, while the North and East objected to it on the grounds that one of the branches would be located inside the Cherokee Nation. Others argued that the branches simply were not needed. Opposed to the bill were Henry Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen, both opponents of Jackson. In 1830, Frelinghuysen had also been an outspoken opponent of Jackson's Indian removal bill. One of the strongest supporters of the bill was Jackson opponent and gold mine owner John C. Calhoun.[211]

---

[210] Green, "Gold Mining," 138-40, 132; "The Gold Mines of North Carolina," *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review* 11 (July 1844): 64.
[211] Green, "Gold Mining," 140-42; "Assay Offices, Gold Districts, North Carolina and Georgia, etc., To Accompany Bill H. R. No. 84, Report No. 39," 22d Congress, U. S. House of Representatives, 22 December 1831, 26.

Calhoun framed his argument in favor of branch mints partially in regional terms. He believed that the presence of the mint in Philadelphia gave Northern businesses an unreasonable financial advantage over businesses in the South because the annual cost of transportation to Philadelphia for southern mine owners was in excess of $100,000. Calhoun also believed that the establishment of the regional mints would bolster American currency and that the demand for specie would help make his and other Georgia mines profitable. The South Carolina senator was able to get himself appointed to a select committee of five to investigate the establishment of branches at New Orleans and Dahlonega.[212]

In Senate discussions over the branch mints bill, Henry Clay asked Calhoun if Dahlonega was in the Cherokee Nation. Calhoun dodged the question by stating that Dahlonega was an established town with a court house and had representatives in the state legislature. At a later point in the debate, Calhoun made remarks about the Cherokees on whose land the mint would be built. He stated that although he had always supported the removal of the Indians to the West, he regretted the actions that were taken against the Cherokees. Regardless of how unfortunate the course taken against them, he continued, the area was now occupied by a white population. He also stated that he understood that the Cherokees had petitioned to retain lands that were still in their possession. Calhoun further stated that he did not believe that Georgia planned to remove the Cherokees from the lands which they still held possession of, but nevertheless, the gold

[212] Wilson, "Introduction," *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 12:xlii; Remarks and motion about proposed branches of the U. S. Mint, 5 February 1835, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 12:413; "Further Remarks on the Bill to Establish Branch Mints," 24 February, 1835, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 12:505; John C. Calhoun to John H. Wheeler, 24 December 1837, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 14:23-24.

region adjacent to the lands where the Cherokees actually lived was now heavily populated by whites.[213]

Exactly what Calhoun meant when he said that he regretted the actions taken against the Cherokees is unclear. Vice President Calhoun remained silent during the debate on the 1830 Indian Removal bill, not only on the Senate floor, but in his personal correspondence as well. As United States Senator, he continued to remain silent when Jackson sent federal troops to the Cherokee Nation and as Georgia took control of the gold mines. In Calhoun's case, his actions, or in some cases, his lack thereof, speak loudly. He, his brother-in-law, and a son invested in gold mines inside the Cherokee Nation and none of the three spoke against actions taken by Georgia or the federal government against the Cherokees. Calhoun's comments, therefore, must be disingenuous. Calhoun's interests in internal improvements in Cherokee country and his actions while Secretary of War also confirm that Calhoun did not object to the expulsion of the Cherokees from their land or how it came about. These latter two subjects, internal improvements and his Indian policy while Secretary of War, will be discussed in later chapters.

When the U. S. Mint bill finally passed the Senate with a vote of 24 to 19, it authorized the establishment of branches at Dahlonega, Charlotte, and New Orleans. The bill became law in March 1835 and the Charlotte mint opened in December 1837, while the Dahlonega mint opened in 1838. During its first year of operation in 1838, the Dahlonega mint recorded $102,915.[214]

---

[213] "Further Remarks on the Bill to Establish Branch Mints," 24 February, 1835, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 12:505-507.
[214] Green, "Gold Mining," 141-42; Coulter, *Auraria*, 14.

Gold Production

In the 1840 census, Cherokee County, North Carolina, which was created from Cherokee lands, ranked fifth in the state with $1,075 in gold that was mined. This figure is low when compared to other North Carolina counties outside of the former Cherokee Nation. For example, Franklin County ranked first with $200,000 in gold produced while Burke was second with $38,122. The story was different in Georgia, where all counties that reported gold in 1840 were spread across the northern part of the state and had been recently created from either Cherokee or Creek lands. Carroll County, which was created from Creek lands and was located on the southern border of the Cherokee Nation, reported $17,370 in gold produced. Columbia County, which was also created from Creek lands, reported $4,000 in gold. Columbia is located on the Savannah River just above Augusta. The other counties that reported gold production — Lumpkin, Habersham, Forsyth, Rabun, and Cherokee — were all created from lands inside the 1819 borders of the Cherokee Nation. Lumpkin reported $74,460, Habersham reported $14,431, Forsyth reported $8,000, Rabun reported $3,000, and Cherokee reported $620. In all, Georgia reported 130 smelting houses, 405 men employed in the gold industry, and $121,881 in gold produced. Alabama reported no smelting houses, 47 men employed in the gold industry, and $61,230 in gold produced. Finally, Tennessee reported no smelting houses, 4 men employed in the gold industry, and $1,500 in gold produced. Monroe County, the home of Coker Creek where the first gold in Tennessee was discovered, did not report any gold mining operations. The only Tennessee counties to report gold production were Blount County ($500), which is just north of Monroe County, and Sumner County ($1,500), which is in the Middle District of the state.[215]

[215] 1840 census, 178, 202, 250, 358.

The failure to report gold production in the census by some counties known to produce gold, such as Monroe County, may be due in part to the fact that many gold miners pocketed their gold nuggets and left the area or traded their nuggets for goods without taking them to an assay office or a branch mint. For these same reasons, the figures for gold production at the regional mints are low and do not represent the true value of gold produced in the South. Also, the manufactures censuses experienced problems with reporting in all categories including gold.

Although more gold was taken from the southern gold fields than was processed at the local mints, a look at the statistics for the Dahlonega mint does reflect the trends in gold production for Georgia over the next two decades. The Dahlonega mint, which is where most of the gold produced in former Cherokee lands was sent, reported its highest production of gold in 1843 with $582,782.50 in gold coin minted. After 1843, the amount of coinage steadily declined to $244,130.50 in 1849, half the peak figure. Production picked up again in the next three years until it reached $473,815.00 in 1852, then dropped rapidly to a low point of $32,906.00 in 1857.[216]

The reduction in gold production was due to the fact that by the mid-1840s, many of the gold mines in Georgia and North Carolina experienced financial difficulties. The placer mines were giving out and the high cost of running the mines caused owners to look for other opportunities as they closed their mines. The Reed Gold and Copper Company folded in 1854 and was auctioned off to settle debts. It changed hands several times over the next several decades. Many gold mine owners in western North Carolina took their slaves to California as part of the 1849 gold rush. By early 1854, approximately two hundred slaves from McDowell

[216] Yeates, *A Preliminary Report on a Part*, 30-32; Coulter, *Auraria,* 14.

and Burke counties had been transported to California to work the mines for their owners. The risk that Congress might decide to make California a free state discouraged other North Carolinians from taking their slaves to the far west's gold region.[217]

Many Georgia mines had also given out by the time of the California Gold Rush and an exodus of whites from Cherokee Georgia began. Auraria lost most of her remaining citizens and turned into something resembling a ghost town. Like their counterparts in North Carolina, Georgia miners made their way to California by boat and many died on the long journey. In 1852, newspapers reported that thirty Georgians had died on board a ship as it made its way from Panama to California. Although many of the Georgia gold mines did not produce much profit for their owners, a lot of gold was extracted from the soils of North Georgia. By the time the Dahlonega mint closed in 1861, it had handled $6,115,569 in gold. And many of the mines were reopened after the Civil War.[218]

Conclusion

It is important to acknowledge that Georgia began passing its series of stifling laws that limited many Cherokee rights, including the right to testify against whites and the right to free assembly, before the Georgia gold rush began. These laws were designed to emphasize the state's sovereignty over Cherokee lands. The crisis between Georgia and the Cherokees had been simmering since 1802, when the federal government promised to extinguish Indian titles to land

---

[217] John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, *Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 72-73, 192-93; Knapp, *Golden Promise,* 21-23.
[218] Coulter, *Auraria*, 14, 110-11; Yeates, *A Preliminary Report*, 30-32.

in Georgia in exchange for lands in the Mississippi territory, and reached a critical point when the Cherokees established their constitutional government. The gold rush may have accelerated some events by forcing the state government to move to take control of the gold region and by speeding up the land distribution system, but it did not set in motion the passage of the series of laws squashing Cherokee jurisdiction and sovereignty. It is also doubtful that the discovery of gold in North Georgia influenced President Andrew Jackson or his fellow Tennessean and chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs John Bell, to make Indian removal the first piece of legislation that his new administration sent to Congress. By 1826, Georgia had largely succeeded in removing the Creek Indians from its borders. In December of that year, the state turned its focus on the Cherokees. The Georgia legislature sent a resolution to President John Quincy Adams encouraging him to press for the removal of the remaining Indians from the state. In 1827, following the establishment of the Cherokee constitution, the state assembly denounced it and loudly voiced its sovereignty over Cherokee lands and began drafting the series of laws that were passed in 1828 and following years. The federal government also increased its pressures on the Cherokees following the creation of the Cherokee constitution and before the gold rush. On May 6, 1828, the government signed a treaty with the western Cherokees that obligated the federal government to step up its efforts to encourage eastern Cherokees to emigrate. As a result of this agreement, Agent Hugh Montgomery increased his recruiting efforts and signed up five hundred Cherokees and their slaves to move to Indian Territory. All of these events occurred before the gold rush.[219]

[219] Theda Perdue and Michael Green, *The Cherokee Nation,* 57-58, 61; Moulton, *John Ross: Cherokee Chief*, 38.

On the other hand, the discovery of gold in Cherokee Georgia attracted the attention of many non-Georgians, like John C. Calhoun and Robert Love, who were powerful political leaders, or had friends who were, that influenced the political and economic development of Cherokee Georgia. Calhoun's presence in the Cherokee Nation encouraged the whites of North Georgia to pursue ownership of the land and encouraged state leaders in their efforts to secure state sovereignty over those lands. Calhoun's efforts to secure a postal route and a regional mint helped secure federal recognition of the legitimacy of white occupation of Cherokee lands. The gold rush also brought a flood of settlers, and new voters, to North Georgia that suddenly made the region a political force to be reckoned with by both Georgia and national politicians.

Because events unfolded so rapidly in the late 1820s and 1830s, the discovery of gold on Cherokee lands has often been called the primary, or a primary cause of Cherokee removal. It was a contributing cause, but only one of many. In a letter to the United States Senate and House of Representatives in June 1836, Ross and seven other national leaders acknowledged that the fight for control of the gold fields contributed to the prevailing tensions in Georgia. However, in the same letter Ross described how many Cherokees, including himself, had been dispossessed of their non-gold lands. Ross also recounted the other mineral riches in Cherokee lands:

> The entire country is covered with a dense forest of valuable timber, also abounding in inexhaustible quarries of marble and lime stone. Above all, it possesses the most extensive regions of the precious metal known in the United States. The riches of the gold mines are incalculable, some of the lots of forty acres of land, embracing gold mines, which have been surveyed and disposed of

by lottery, under the authority of Georgia, (with the encumbrance of the Indian title) have been sold for upward of thirty thousand dollars!

There are also extensive banks of iron ore interspersed throughout the country. Mineralogists who have travelled over a portion of this territory, are fully persuaded, from what they have seen, that lead and silver mines will also be found in the mountain regions. Independent of all these natural advantages and invaluable resources, there are many extensive and valuable improvements made upon the lands by the native Cherokee inhabitants, and those adopted as Cherokee citizens, by intermarriages.[220]

The Cherokee lands contained many valuable rocks and minerals, like marble and copper, that had not yet been exploited by whites, but would be within the next ten to fifteen years after removal. The Cherokee lands also contained many minerals, besides gold, that had been sought after by whites. From the mid-eighteenth century when an English agent trespassed on Cherokee soil to begin digging for kaolin, to hunters and land speculators looking for salt licks to establish backcountry villages near, to saltpeter mines that caused a rift in the Cherokee Nation over land cessions, the Cherokees contended with many threats to their mineral resources. Their initial reactions in the eighteenth century cases, when they had a town and clan-based government and were dealing with an imperial colonial government or a weak and new American national government, both of which were located a great distance from their villages, were to arrest or attack intruders. By the nineteenth century, however, as they struggled to form a centralized

[220] John Ross, et.al. to The Senate and House of Representatives, 21 June 1836, in Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 1:427-44.

government, the Cherokees began to pass laws governing control of their mineral rights, turned away from violence, and began negotiating lease agreements.

The period from the American Revolution to 1838 was also a period when the federal, state, and territorial governments, their relationships to each other, and their relationships with the Cherokees were being defined. Until an Indian department was established in 1786 in the Department of War, state and local governments took the lead in dealing with the Cherokees. This frequently led to uncontrolled intrusions into Cherokee country by whites, violence, and coerced land cessions, as in the case of the Cumberland salt licks. Even with the establishment of the Indian department, it took the federal government another decade to wrestle control of Cherokee affairs away from local settlers and state militias. After the federal government established the civilization program and Indian agencies, they were finally able to take the lead role in land cessions negotiations and the Cherokees became more dependent on the federal government to control their relationships with intruders and with neighboring state and territorial governments. When the federal government became less able and less willing to protect the Cherokees from intruders and the demands of state governments, as in the case of Georgia and the Cherokees, the Cherokees finally lost control of both their mineral resources and their lands.[221]

.

[221] Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*: *1738-1812* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 171.

Chapter IV

Rivers, Roads, and Rails: The Influence of Transportation Needs and Internal Improvements

Introduction

In 1821, the *Montgomery Republican* and *Niles' Register* reported the journey of a keelboat through Cherokee territory. The boat was the *Tennessee Patriot*. She measured fifty feet long and was built at Southwest Point in East Tennessee (present-day Kingston), where barrels of flour and whiskey were placed on board. The *Tennessee Patriot* traveled a hundred miles down the Tennessee River to the mouth of the Hiwassee, then another sixty-five miles up the Hiwassee to the Wocoa (Ocoee.) She ascended the Wocoa several miles to a portage area that was commonly used by smaller boats. The portage area lay east of the McNairs' (a prominent mixed-blood family) and the federal Georgia Road. The keelboat was carried ten miles overland, then placed in the Conasauga River and floated down to the Eustanaula, then to the Coosa and Alabama rivers where she finally landed at Montgomery, Alabama. The *Tennessee Patriot* traveled nearly one thousand miles through both Cherokee and Creek lands. This remarkable story illustrates the difficulty of transportation between neighboring southern states in the early nineteenth-century and the determination of white entrepreneurs to carry their goods through Indian lands to market.[222]

---

[222] "Internal Navigation," *Niles' Register*, 24 March 1821, reprinted from the *Montgomery Republican*; "Map of the Country Belonging to the Cherokee and Creek Indians, 1815," located at the University of Georgia, available online at http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1815m4.jpg.

As seen in earlier chapters, the Southeast developed a thriving commercial economy by the 1790s. Euro-Americans wanted to move their goods to distant markets across states and territories and to ports on the Gulf and Atlantic. To reach these markets, whites often had to move their goods through Native American country. The Cherokees, however, already used these same transportation routes and resisted trespassing through their lands. They contested attempts by whites to take control of their transportation systems. From the white point of view, the full economic promise of agriculture, industry, and trade in the South could not be realized as long as control of strategic transportation routes remained in Cherokee hands. The Cherokee Nation presented an obstacle to their pursuit of commerce and their desire to build roads, canals, and railways. The goal of this chapter is to illuminate the importance of transportation routes and internal improvements as factors in treaty negotiations and the removal of the Cherokees.

Transportation Needs of Euro-Americans in Cherokee Country before 1786

The earliest uses of transportation routes in Cherokee territory by Europeans and Anglo-Americans included hunting, trade, and immigration. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Cherokees and English established a thriving trade using Indian trails that led from Charleston, South Carolina, to the Lower Cherokee towns in northwest South Carolina and continuing to the Overhill settlements in East Tennessee. One branch of these trails led to the "forked country" of the Creek Indians, which lay between the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers. Settlers from the colonies (later, states) of Virginia and North Carolina followed the Great Indian Warpath southwest through the Appalachian Mountains to hunt for game in what would later

become the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. Rivers, streams, and Indian trails served as the main routes for early white immigrants into the Cherokee lands of the old Southwest Territory.[223]

Travel on roads or horse paths in the early southwest was slow and dangerous because of weather, the poor condition of the roads, a lack of roads, and the possibility of Indian attack. Transportation of goods by waterways was also very slow due to flooding and drought that raised and lowered the river levels unpredictably and due to numerous obstacles in the waterways ranging from snags and sandbars to whirlpools, shoals, and the fall line. Before steamboats arrived on inland waters in the 1810s, cotton and other goods were floated to the ports on the Atlantic or the gulf in cotton-boxes, large flat-bottomed boats sixty to eighty feet long, or on pole-boats, flat or decked boats usually with a single pole in the rear for steering. After reaching their destination, the cotton-boxes were broken up and sold as lumber and the pole-boats were filled with supplies and laboriously steered upstream to their origin. After the arrival of the steamboats, the states contracted for internal navigation improvements so the steamboats could travel from the seaports to major cities located along the fall line such as Augusta, Macon, Milledgeville, and Columbus in Georgia and Montgomery in Alabama. At cities along the fall line, steamboats picked up goods floated downstream on smaller boats because the steamboats could not go above the fall line (see Figure 11).[224]

Many early pioneers traveled west on the Tennessee River to emigrate to the Natchez district and the Cumberland Plateau. However, the strange geography of the river made it very

---

[223] Randle Bond Truett, *Trade and Travel Around the Southern Appalachians Before 1830* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), 16-18; Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee*, 64-73, 87-88.

[224] Ulrich B. Phillips, *A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), 6-8, 71.

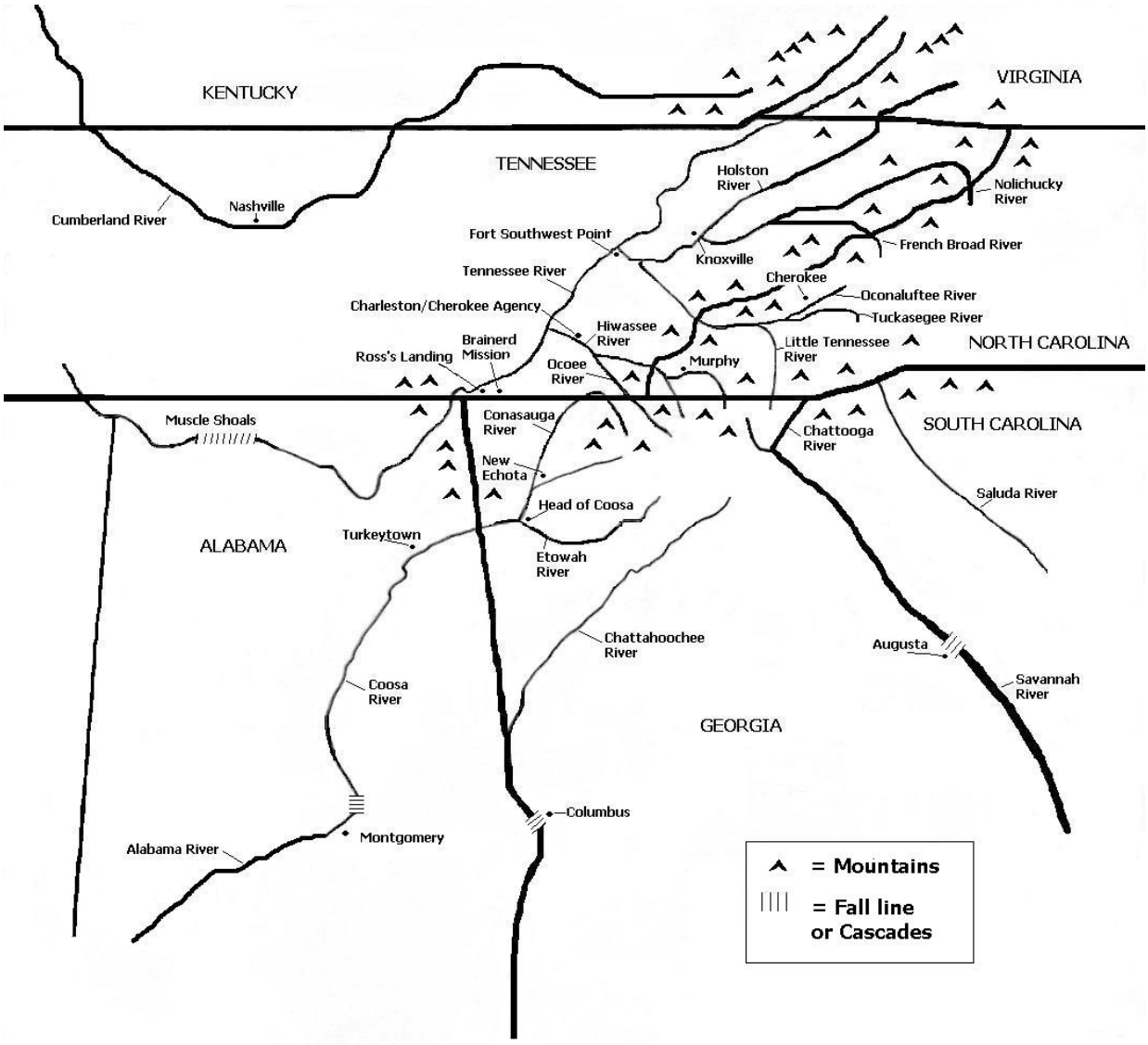

Figure 11. Major Rivers in Cherokee Country.

dangerous and prevented it from becoming the great highway that other rivers such as the Ohio or Mississippi had become. The obstacles that lay along the river were legendary. Thomas Jefferson wrote about one of the river hazards, the Suck, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*: "Above the Chickamogga towns is a whirlpool called the Sucking pot, which takes in trunks of trees or boats, and throws them out again half a mile below." The Indians called the treacherous spot *Untiguhi*, for "pot in the water." The Cherokees believed that the Suck was a haunted whirlpool, where a house full of people lived on the bottom of the river. The inhabitants reached through the beams of their house to pull travelers into the depths. In later years, obstacles like the Suck made it nearly impossible for steamboat captains to traverse the entire length of the river. Instead, steamboat lines operated on sections of the river between the obstacles, such as the sections from Knoxville to Chattanooga and from Chattanooga to Decatur. In some cases, railroad lines were built to transport passengers around the treacherous sections.[225]

Another hazard to travel on the Tennessee River came in human form. The Chickamaugans were a group of alienated Cherokees, under the leadership of Tsiyugunsini, or Dragging Canoe. Dragging Canoe and his followers broke off from the main body of Cherokees after the Sycamore Shoals Treaty in 1775, by which a large portion of Cherokee land was sold to the representatives of the Transylvania Company. Siding with the British during the Revolution, the Chickamaugans attacked American forces and frontier settlements and in retribution the Americans attacked Cherokee towns. In March 1777, many homeless Cherokees followed Dragging Canoe to new settlements on Chickamauga Creek in present day Hamilton County, Tennessee, where they were later joined by more Cherokees, Creeks, Tories, and black slave

[225] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 11; Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas*, 464, 544.

refugees. In April 1779, a group of Virginia and North Carolina volunteers under the command of Colonel Evan Shelby ransacked and burned the Chickamauga villages and carried off twenty thousand bushels of corn. This occurred while many of the Cherokee warriors were off fighting for the British along the Georgia and South Carolina borders. Rather than rebuild on the burned town sites, Dragging Canoe established five new towns further down the Tennessee River. It was from these five Lower Towns, still hungry and smarting from Shelby's invasion a few months earlier, that the Chickamaugans launched their initial attacks on the Donelson party.[226]

One of the best-known stories of early travel in Cherokee country is the story of John Donelson, Sr., a Virginia surveyor. In 1779, he prepared to move his family from Fort Patrick Henry (at present-day Kingsport) to the Big Salt Lick (present-day Nashville). Traveling with Donelson was his daughter Rachel, who later married Andrew Jackson, and several other families. Their four-month journey took them down the Holston River to the Tennessee, then they ascended the Ohio River to the Cumberland River. Excerpted below are several entries from Donelson's journal that illustrate the dangers of travel in Cherokee country before Tennessee was a state: [227]

> *JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE, intended by God's permission, in the good boat Adventure, from Fort Patrick Henry on Holston River, to the French Salt Springs on Cumberland River, kept by John Donaldson. (Donelson)*

---

[226] Grace Steele Woodward, *The Cherokees*, 1963 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, Tenth printing, 1988), 88-89, 97, 100; Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee*, 117-19, 183, 185-89.
[227] Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennesse*e, 197-202; Samuel Cole Williams, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country: 1540-1800*, 1928 (Reprint, Nashville: Franklin Book Reprints, 1970), 231-42.

December 22, 1779 – Took our departure from the fort and fell down the river to the mouth of Reedy Creek, where we were stopped by the fall of water, and most excessive hard frost; and after much delay and many difficulties we arrived at the mouth of Cloud's Creek, on Sunday evening, the 20th February, 1780, where we lay by until Sunday, 27th, when we took our departure with sundry other vessels bound for the same voyage, and on the same day struck the Poor Valley Shoal, together with Mr. Boyd and Mr. Rounsifer, on which shoal we lay that afternoon and succeeding night in much distress.

Monday, February 28th, 1780 – In the morning the water rising, we got off the shoal, after landing thirty persons to lighten our boat. In attempting to land on an island, received some damage and lost sundry articles, and came to camp on the south shore, where we joined sundry other vessels also bound down.

Wednesday, 8th – . . . we had come in sight of another town, situated likewise on the south side of the river, nearly opposite a small island. Here they again invited us to come on shore, called us brothers, and observing the boats standing off for the opposite channel, told us that "their side of the river was better for boats to pass." And here we must regret the unfortunate death of young Mr. Payne, on board Capt. Blackemore's boat, who was mortally wounded by reason of the boat running too near the northern shore opposite the town, where some of the enemy lay concealed. . . .

Tuesday, 14th – Set out early. On this day two boats approaching too near the shore, were fired on by the Indians. Five of the crew were wounded, but not dangerously.[228]

The Donelson party arrived at the Big Salt Lick on the Cumberland River on April 24 without further serious incident. By comparison to their journey on the Tennessee River through Cherokee country, their travels on the Ohio and Cumberland Rivers were uneventful.[229]

Transportation Needs of Euro-Americans in Cherokee Country after 1786

In 1786, Congress passed an ordinance for the management of Indian affairs. It divided the Indian department into northern and southern districts and placed the district agents under the power of the Secretary of War and Congress. As a result of the ordinance, the Secretary of War took primary responsibility for implementing the Indian policies of Congress including the negotiation of treaties and communications and trade with the Indians. A lack of money and the weakness of the Confederation undermined the War Department's authority and made it difficult for Secretary of War Henry Knox to maintain control of conflicts with Indians caused by frontier expansion. The creation of the United States Constitution placed control of the War Department and Indian policy under the control of the President and enabled Knox, who continued as Secretary of War, to begin developing more effective federal Indian policies.[230]

---

[228] Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennesse*e, 197-202; Williams, *Early Travels*, 231-42.
[229] Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennesse*e, 202; Williams, *Early Travels*, 241.
[230] Horsman, *Expansion*, 33, 53-54; Dorothy Williams Potter, ed. *Passports of Southeastern Pioneers: 1770-1823* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1982), 50, 68-69.

The establishment of the Office of Indian Affairs altered relations between Native Americans and Euro-Americans and allowed the federal government to implement what historian Reginald Horsman calls "a more elaborate policy" that encompassed a broad spectrum of issues including transportation through Indian lands. As an instrument of Congress or the President, the Secretary of War and his Indian agents began to exercise control over Indian affairs; before that time, local settlers felt empowered to deal directly with the Indians. The shift toward federal authority over Indian affairs resulted in changes in policy toward transportation within Cherokee country, where settlers and agents of the federal government were often at odds.[231]

Passports

The 1786 Indian affairs ordinance provided guidelines on the use of passports to control travel through Indian country. It stated "that no . . . passports be granted to any other person than citizens of the United States, to travel through the Indian nations, without their having previously made their business known to the superintendent of the district, and received his special approbation." The district agent regulated travel and commerce in his district and controlled these activities by issuing or withholding passports. Other various agents of the War Department also had the authority to issue passes for Indian territory or foreign countries adjacent to the United States.[232]

The issuance of passports to people traveling through or conducting business in Cherokee country was further detailed in Article 9 of the July 2, 1791 Treaty of Holston: "No citizen or

[231] Horsman, *Expansion*, 171.
[232] Potter, *Passports,* 50, 68-69.

inhabitant of the United States shall attempt to hunt or destroy the game on the lands of the Cherokees; nor shall any citizen or inhabitant go onto Cherokee country, without a passport first obtained from the Governor of some one of the United States, or territorial districts, or such other person as the President of the United State may, from time to time, authorize or grant the same."[233]

The Treaty of Holston was intended to achieve peace on the North Carolina frontier west of the Appalachians. Settlers from Virginia and North Carolina had illegally established settlements in Cherokee territory and established a new state called Franklin. In an effort to expand their settlements and drive Cherokees from the area, the settlers waged war not only on the rebellious lower towns of the Cherokees but also on the peaceful Overhill towns. In 1788, men under the leadership of John Sevier, who later served as Governor of Tennessee, arranged a peace meeting with a group of chiefs, then proceeded to murder the chiefs, including the venerable Old Tassel. Violence was rampant in East Tennessee for over a decade. The clause in the 1791 Treaty of Holston which implemented the issuing of passports for travel in the Cherokee Nation was intended to control illegal hunting and squatting by whites in Cherokee country. The federal government also wanted to control trade and foreign agents who might agitate the Cherokees.[234]

The requirement to obtain a passport before traveling through Indian lands was a nuisance most whites resented. In 1811, Silas Dinsmoor, agent to the Choctaws, announced that he would arrest any Negro traveling in Choctaw territory whose owner had no passport for him.

---

[233] Potter, *Passports*, 82.
[234] Treaty of Holston, 2 July 1791, in Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:30; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 23.

Dinsmoor's goal was to reduce the number of runaway slaves who took refuge in the Choctaw nation. However, in 1812, when Andrew Jackson transported twenty-six slaves belonging to a company in which he was a partner from Natchez to Nashville, he deliberately ignored the requirement. As he passed the Choctaw agency, he was met by armed guards. Jackson expected a confrontation but was allowed to pass. Jackson objected vociferously to Dinsmoor's tyranny against honest citizens who were being " threatened with chains and confinement for peaceably traveling a road ceded by solemn Treaty." Jackson attempted to have Dinsmoor removed from the Choctaw agency, but without success. While the story does not directly involve the Cherokees, it illustrates the frustrations of many whites with federal interference in Indian affairs and restrictions on travel through Indian lands. In particular, it illustrates the attitude of Jackson, whose administration authored the 1830 Indian Removal Act providing funds and authorization to remove all Indians living east of the Mississippi to the West.[235]

Safe Passage Clauses and the Cumberland Road

The late eighteenth century was also a period of significant frontier expansion in the old southwest that changed boundaries and altered relations with the Indians. This was especially true west of the Appalachians as new territories and states were established. In 1790, North Carolina ceded all of its lands west of the Alleghenies to Congress. William Blount was appointed governor of the region, which was called the Territory South of the River Ohio. In 1796, this region became the state of Tennessee. Although the Cherokees ceded most of their land in northeast Tennessee to settlers in the 1775 Treaty of Sycamore Shoals, their claims to much of the land in the

[235] Andrew Jackson to Willie Blount, 25 January 1812, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, 2:277-79; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Viking, 2001), 52.

remaining portion of Tennessee still posed problems for the new state. In 1799, two Moravian missionaries, Abraham Steiner and Frederick de Schweinitz, noted the problem caused by the continued existence of the Cherokee Nation in Tennessee. The following excerpt from the missionaries' journal is taken from Samuel Cole Williams' *Early Travels in The Tennessee Country*:

> Knoxville is now the seat of the government of the State of Tennessee. The Superior Court of the eastern part of the State, also, has its sessions here. Both parts of the State, the eastern, or Washington District, and the western, or Mero District, appear to be mistrustful of each other, and each part would be glad to have all offices within its own confines, which condition is intensified because a great part of the Cherokee country, viz., their hunting grounds, lies between the two parts and they cannot, therefore, meet without passing through great wilderness.[236]

As white settlements in the eastern and western parts of Tennessee grew, tensions mounted between the Cherokees and settlers. The settlers viewed the Cherokee territory sandwiched between their lands as a prime area for expansion. Illegal settlements, hunting, and travel in the Cherokee Territory increased the tension between the Cherokees and their white neighbors. Misunderstandings between the two different cultures often ignited confrontations. The increase in the white population on either side of the Cherokee lands made it easier to push the Cherokees south toward Georgia and Alabama.

---

[236] Williams, *Early Travels*, 455; An Act to Accept the North Carolina Cession, 2 April 1790, in Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. 4, 13-17.*

During the late eighteenth century, Southwest Point was located on the most direct route between the Washington and Mero districts of Tennessee. Perched on a hill above the confluence of the Clinch and Tennessee rivers, the fort was a strategic location for control of both water and land communications. Many settlers moving to the western settlements in the Tennessee territory passed through the area. About 1788, while the region was still part of the state of North Carolina, the North Carolina legislature authorized the establishment of a road across Cherokee lands which separated White's Fort and the Cumberland settlements. This road was called the Avery Trace or Cumberland Road (see Figure 12).[237]

In 1792, John Sevier, then a leader of the Tennessee militia, took control of Southwest Point. Territorial governor William Blount called on Sevier and the militia to protect the Cumberland settlements in Middle Tennessee. Several fords crossed the Clinch and Tennessee rivers near Southwest Point, making it a strategic location for Sevier to launch raids on Indian settlements if necessary. At the time, hostilities raged on the Tennessee frontier. The *Knoxville Gazette* reported arson, horse theft, and murders almost weekly.[238]

The July 2, 1791 Treaty of Holston, which provided for passports through Cherokee lands, also provided for safe passage of travelers from East to West Tennessee. Article V stated: "It is stipulated and agreed, that the citizens and inhabitants of the United States, shall have a free and unmolested use of a road from Washington district to Mero district, and of the navigation of the Tennessee river." The Treaty of Holston was the first Cherokee treaty to include a "safe passage" clause to protect communications and travel between white settlements

---

[237] Samuel D. Smith, ed., *Fort Southwest Point Archaeological Site, Kingston, Tennessee: A Multidisciplinary Interpretation* (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, 1993), 17.
[238] Smith, *Fort Southwest Point,* 18; *Knoxville Gazette,* 28 Feb. 1792, 21 April 1792, 5 May 1792.

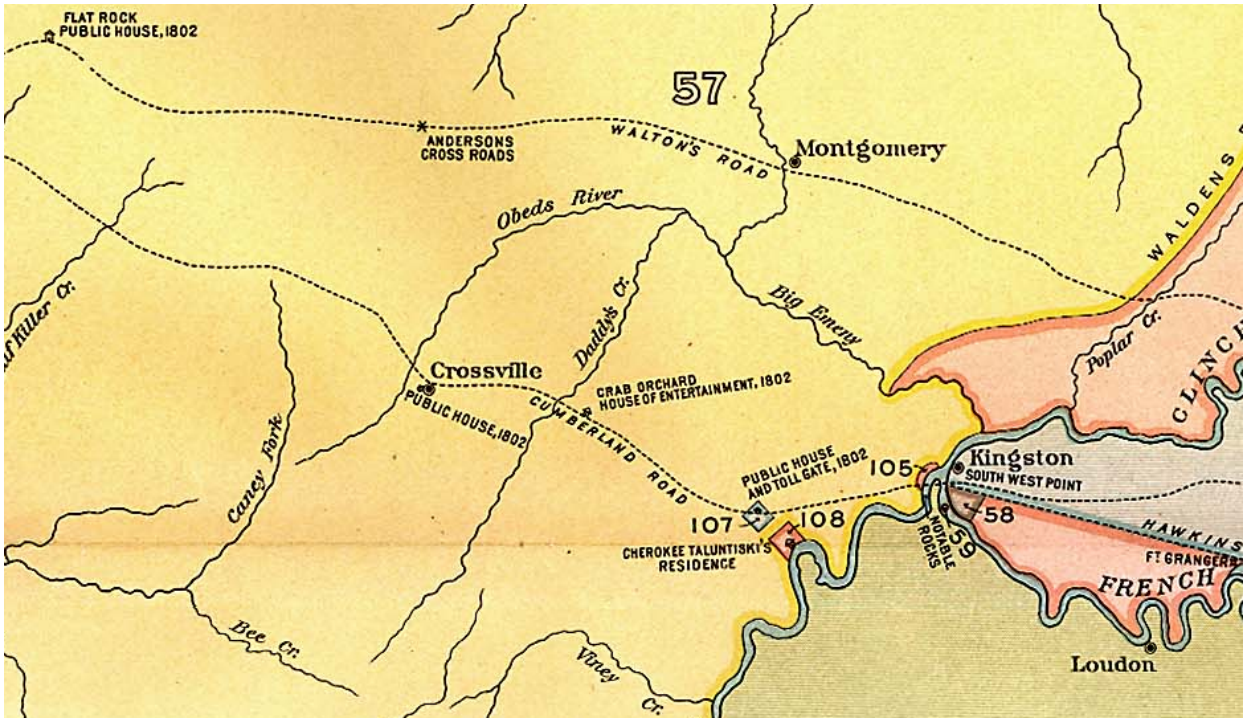

Figure 12. Fort Southwest Point and the Cumberland Road. Source: *Tennessee (Detail),* in "Indian Land Cessions in the United States," compiled by Charles C. Royce, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1896-1897* (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), PL. CLXII.

by way of Cherokee lands. This proved to be an important precedent for future commercial, military, and emigration goals of Euro-Americans. However, the immediate object of guaranteeing free right of travel from East Tennessee settlements in the Hamilton (Knoxville) and Washington (Jonesboro) Districts to the Cumberland settlements around Nashville in the Mero District was not realized. Travel between the East Tennessee and Cumberland settlements remained dangerous. Travelers who passed through Cherokee lands that lay between the two districts complained of robberies and murder. In 1792, Creek Indians attacked a group of thirty-seven militiamen near the Crab-Orchard on the Cumberland Road. Four militiamen were killed, four were lost, and one was wounded.[239]

The new governor of Tennessee, John Sevier, wanted to remedy the problem of travel through Indian lands. In 1798 he organized a treaty meeting between commissioners representing the state and federal governments and Cherokee leaders. For that meeting, Sevier instructed the commissioners on several objectives:

> The communication of the Holston and Clinch with the Tennessee, and the right hand of the last river from our Southeast boundary to its confluence with the Clinch, are points to which you will direct your attention, as also to secure from future molestation the settlements so far as they have progressed on the northern and western borders of the state. The connecting [of] the districts of Mero and Hamilton now separated by a space of unextinguished hunting grounds of near

[239] Treaty of Holston, 2 July 1791, Kappler, *Indian Affairs,* 2:30; Robert. H. White, ed. *Messages of the Governors of Tennessee*, (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1952), 1:118-19; Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee*, 595.

> eighty miles in width, will be considered by you Gentlemen as an object of great importance, as the inconveniences resulting from the present state of our settlements must be obvious to every mind conversant with the geography of the country, and is certainly too irksome to be continued, when the facts are fairly represented.[240]

The first treaty meeting organized by Sevier failed. Determined to resolve disputes between white settlers and Cherokees over the Treaty of Holston, Sevier organized a second meeting at Tellico Blockhouse, which succeeded. The "First Tellico Treaty" as the October 2, 1798 treaty is often called, included a clause that reconfirmed safe passage and expanded its scope. Article VII reads:

> The Cherokee nation agree, that the Kentucky road, running between the Cumberland mountain and the Cumberland river, where the same shall pass through the Indian land, shall be an open and free road for the use of the citizens of the United States, in the like manner as the road from Southwest Point to Cumberland river. In consideration of which it is hereby agreed on the part of the United States, that until settlements shall make it improper, the Cherokee hunters shall be at liberty to hunt and take game upon the lands relinquished and ceded by this treaty.[241]

---

[240] John Sevier to James Robertson, James Stewart, Lachlan McIntosh, 4 July 1798, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:63-64.
[241] Treaty at Tellico, 2 October 1798, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:67-69.

The land cessions made in this treaty lay in Tennessee east of the Cumberland Mountain. The treaty resolved disputes arising from the Treaty of Holston that resulted in confrontations between settlers along the Holston and French Broad Rivers and the Cherokees. Although the treaty did not obtain any new land cessions from the Cherokees through which the Cumberland Road passed, the treaty attempted to secure safe passage for whites traveling through Cherokee lands on the road. The attempt was not entirely successful because assaults on travelers continued. The treaty also affirmed the rights of Cherokees to hunt on ceded lands until those lands became thickly settled by whites.[242]

Due to weather, neglect, and Indian attacks, the Cumberland Road fell into disrepair. By 1799, the Tennessee legislature was calling for a new road. One of the purposes of the 1799 state act was to prod the federal government into marking the route the road would take. To further encourage the federal government, the state legislature was prepared to spend one thousand dollars for cutting a new route. Two more years passed and no safe and free road through Cherokee lands existed. Various primitive routes used by travelers to the Cumberland settlements were in poor condition and continued to harbor criminals. Cherokees collected fees for ferriage at river crossings. In 1801, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn instructed commissioners on terms for a new treaty to resolve the problem of the Cumberland Road. "You will endeavor to prevail upon [the Cherokees] to cede all the land that lies northward of the road, from Knoxville to the Nashville settlements, run conformably to the treaty of 1791, or, if they should be unwilling to grant this, a strip of land, from one to five miles in width, to include said

[242] Treaty at Tellico, 2 October 1798, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:67-69.

road, in its whole extent across their lands." The terms provided not only for a new road through Indian lands, but for the cession of a large tract of land.[243]

The Cherokees initially balked at holding a meeting to discuss the construction of another road. However, they later agreed to a meeting in February 1802. At this meeting the Cherokees once again rejected the construction of a road through their lands to replace the old 1788 road. In 1804, federal Cherokee agent Return J. Meigs obtained permission from the Cherokees to improve conditions along the Cumberland Road to Nashville. The federal government authorized Thomas N. Clark and his associates to establish several stops on the road that would provide food and lodging for travelers. For each stand established by Clark, he would pay the Cherokees $200 per year. Finally, after years of struggling with the federal government and the Cherokees, Tennessee settlers received a safe, new road which they felt they had been guaranteed since 1788. The following year, on October 27, 1805, a treaty signed at Tellico Blockhouse ceded lands in the northern part of the country that lay between West and East Tennessee. This cession placed the main overland route between Knoxville and the Cumberland settlements in white hands. This move guaranteed that the new road was secure from future interference by the Cherokees.[244]

Over the years a number of treaties with the Creeks and Cherokees included clauses written by the Americans asking for guaranteed safe passage along roads and rivers. These included Cherokee treaties of 1791, 1798, 1805, 1816, and 1817 and Creek treaties of 1805 and

---

[243] White, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:118-19; Henry Dearborn to Andrew Pickens, James Wilkerson, and Benjamin Hawkins, 24 June 1801, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:123.
[244] Smith, *Fort Southwest Point*, 81-87; Treaty at Tellico, 27 October 1805, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs* (Washington D. C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832), 1:698.

1814. This list of treaties with safe passage clauses illustrates the importance of safe transportation through Indian lands to the white population.[245]

Roads through Cherokee Country

John Sevier, the first governor of Tennessee, made it a priority of his administration to secure roads to connect East Tennessee to neighboring regions. On April 1, 1796, Sevier asked the freshman legislature to consider building a wagon road over the mountains east of Knoxville. The road was projected to run by way of the "warm springs," which suggests the road was intended to follow the French Broad River through the mountains. The proposal for the wagon road, which would pass through lands recently ceded by the Cherokees, was defeated by the legislature. The exact purpose of this road is not clear from the records. However, it is important to note that this proposal was the first message submitted by the first governor of Tennessee to the newly formed state legislature. Historian Robert H. White, in discussing the rebuff of Sevier's proposal by the legislature, argues that it was due to a lack of public funds rather than a lack of interest in internal improvements. Sevier understood the importance of transportation routes to the new state, and politicians and businessmen harbored no qualms about intruding on Cherokee lands to establish them.[246]

As governor of Tennessee, Sevier oversaw the construction of a federal road that ran from Tennessee to Georgia through Cherokee lands. Called the Georgia Road or the Federal Road, it will be referred to in this study as the Georgia Road to distinguish it from another

---

[245] *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, 1:124-25, 637-638, 697-698, 857-58; *American State Papers, Indian Affairs* (Washington D. C.: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 2:88-89; Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:85-86, 107-10, 125-26.
[246] John Sevier to Tennessee State Legislature, 1 April 1796, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:5-7.

federal road that ran east-west from Georgia to Alabama through the Creek Territory. The plan for the Georgia Road began in 1799 as a project to connect Athens, Georgia, with Knoxville and Nashville. However, because of Cherokee opposition, it took three years and four treaty meetings to obtain the necessary approval from the Cherokees. The issue divided the Cherokees. The Glass said that the Cherokees had no desire to sell any more lands or to allow a road to be built through their country. He complained that roads would "occasion many difficulties" between Cherokees and their neighbors. Other Cherokees were interested in learning how they could benefit from the proposed road. At one point, Cherokees accused wealthy Cherokee planter James Vann of Springplace, Georgia, of being bribed to support the project because he purchased a wagon in anticipation of the Georgia Road. The Cherokee Council revoked his place on the council.[247]

After a complicated process of negotiations, an agreement was reached in October 1803 that defined terms for the Georgia Road. Doublehead, initially one of the strongest opponents of the road, was guaranteed operation of the ferry at Fort Southwest Point. The ferry, owned by the Cherokee Nation until Doublehead was given control, was a lucrative business. Doublehead further profited from the treaty by a provision guaranteeing that a spur of the Georgia Road would be built leading to his trading post miles away at Muscle Shoals. Several of the Upper Town Cherokees resented the favoritism shown to the Lower Town chief Doublehead. However, other Cherokees benefited because the treaty stipulated that Cherokees were to form a turnpike company to maintain the road and to collect fees. Cherokees would also be responsible for establishing taverns and ferries on the new road. *In Cherokee Renascence and the New Republic*,

[247] White, *Messages of the Governors*, 187-89; John Sevier to Tennessee State Legislature, 18 September 1805, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:189-92; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*, 77.

William G. McLoughlin argues that the Cherokees were upset over the use of bribes to obtain signatures for the approval of the road. The machinations used by the government to manipulate certain Cherokees alerted them to "the dangers of their divided regional councils and the real limits on their so-called free consent to such actions." The Chickamaugans, led by Doublehead, could be manipulated separately from the other councils by the use of bribes. Although Doublehead was later murdered for accepting bribes, the Cherokees were slow to change their political structure to better guard against minority dominance of treaty negotiations.[248]

On January 15, 1805, Cherokee agent Return J. Meigs informed the Secretary of War that the road to Georgia through the Cherokee Nation was nearly complete. Meigs specified that ferries along this road would be operated by the Cherokees. The new road connected settlements in East Tennessee with roads leading east to Augusta and eventually to Charleston. However, Tennesseans were not satisfied with this new access to an Atlantic market. They soon began clamoring for access to the Gulf trade.[249]

Willie Blount, half brother of territorial governor William Blount, served as governor of Tennessee from 1809 to 1815. During his administration, he was an outspoken advocate of both Indian removal and the establishment of a road from Tennessee to the Mobile River to take advantage of the Gulf trade. In 1811, Blount wrote to President Madison to argue for the removal of all obstructions between Tennessee and the Gulf including Cherokee, Creek, and other Indian titles:

[248] McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence,* 88-90.
[249] Smith, *Fort Southwest Point*, 84.

> We cannot forbear to express our entire approbation of the conduct of the executive of the United States, in regard to the Florida country; situated as we are, it cannot fail to advance in any high degree, the interest of this state, in having an outlet for the abundant product of our rich and fertile soil. Nature seems to have designed the Mobile as a great high way for a large portion of the people of the western country, in as much, as perhaps most, or all of the tributary streams of that valuable out let, take their rise in this, and some of the adjoining states and territories. We believe, that although the government, from motives of sound policy, have heretofore refused to coerce the entire possession of that country, yet we trust that those difficulties may be removed, and that as the claim of the United States is bottomed upon justice and a solemn contract, that possession will be obtained in the shortest practicable time.[250]

That same year the state legislature took up the issues of both the extinguishment of all Indian claims in Tennessee and establishing a dependable transportation route to Mobile. It passed a resolution stating that "the people of this state consider themselves entitled to the right to pass and repass to and from the waters leading to the ocean, in the nearest practicable routes both by land and water, with their produce and merchandise." This was to be accomplished, the legislature resolved, through the establishment of "a good waggon road from East Tennessee to Mobile, and also one from West Tennessee to the same place." The two roads, their turnpike gates, and ferries should be maintained by whites, because Indians were not "able or competent

[250] Willie Blount to President James Madison, 1811, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:322-23.

to keep them up and provide for the comfort of travellers." The road from Nashville would pass through Creek lands while the road from East Tennessee to Mobile would pass through both Cherokee and Creek lands.[251]

President James Madison was well aware of Tennesseeans' desires for roads to Mobile. The previous year, his Secretary of War, William Eustis, informed the Indian agents Silas Dinsmoor, Benjamin Hawkins, and Return J. Meigs that several residents of Tennessee had applied for permits to travel through Creek and Cherokee country to Mobile to carry on trade with that port. To facilitate the initiation of trade, Eustis ordered Hawkins to treat with the Creeks for permission to survey roads through their territory to Mobile.[252]

In Expansion and American Indian Policy: *1738-1812*, Reginald Horsman explains that the period 1810-11 was crucial in relations between the federal government, the southern states, and the Southeastern Indians. Madison and Eustis pressured South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky to extinguish all Indian claims to lands within their states. At the same time, Kentucky and particularly Tennessee demanded that the federal government establish transportation routes to Mobile. Both of these issues, land cession and transportation routes, renewed discussion of Indian removal west of the Mississippi. Horsman argues that Madison had not shown much interest in mass Indian emigration when Jefferson first discussed it during his presidency. However, these new pressures made the idea of a trade of lands and removal of Indians more appealing. While Madison and Secretary of War Eustis were unable to negotiate immediate large land cessions and migration, they plowed ahead with plans to build a road to Mobile without first obtaining permission from the Indians. A wagon road from the Tennessee River to Fort Stoddert

[251] House Resolutions, 1811, *Messages of the Governors*, 1:320-21.
[252] Horsman, *Expansion*, 160-61.

on the Mobile River was opened and a road from Fort Stoddert to the Creek Indian agency on the Flint River was opened. While neither of these roads passed through Cherokee lands, they split the Creek lands.[253]

Post Roads

One of the most pressing demands of new white settlements in the old southwest was postal service. When the Territory South of the River Ohio was formed in 1790, there were no official post roads within the territory or official post roads connecting it with other parts of the country. The territorial governor, William Blount, complained of delays in mail delivery from washed out bridges and Indian attacks. The territory included large expanses of land still in the hands of the Cherokees. In 1794, Blount reported an incident in which an express rider was attacked eighteen miles north of Southwest Point, presumably by Cherokees.[254]

The need for post roads increased after Tennessee became a state. In 1808, Tennessee congressman John Rhea assisted in the creation of "the Committee of the Post Office and Post Roads" in the United States House of Representatives. One of the committee's duties was recommending the establishment of new post roads in the young republic. Rhea served as chairman of the committee for many years. During his tenure, he witnessed the establishment of many new postal routes, including one that he recommended through Cherokee and Creek territory. The route ran from Washington in Rhea County, Tennessee, through Cherokee

[253] Horsman, *Expansion*, 162-64.
[254] Paul J. Phillips, "Never a Safe Road: Postal Communications in the Southwest Territory," *Journal of East Tennessee History*, 62 (1990): 18-32.

territory in north Alabama to Brown's Ferry on the Tennessee River, then dropped south into Creek territory through St. Clair and Shelby counties to the town of Cahaba.[255]

Military Roads

Another need for roads through the old South was for military purposes. Indian uprisings and the threat of invasion by foreign powers demanded the ability to rapidly deploy troops. In 1801, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, acting on directions from President Jefferson, sent commissioners to talk with the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Creeks about opening a road through land they owned to Natchez in the Mississippi Territory. The talks with the Cherokees went poorly. The Cherokees, along with the Chickasaws, claimed land on both sides of the Tennessee River for some distance. Cherokee leader Doublehead objected to the building of military roads through Cherokee land because so many people of different descriptions would pass on the road and cause difficulties.[256]

In 1807, Colonel Edmund P. Gaines oversaw the construction of a narrow post road from Georgia to Fort Stoddert and the Mississippi Territory. However, the military quickly outgrew it. Construction began on a new military road designed to accommodate wagons loaded with supplies. This road opened in 1811 and orders were given to provide "the Creeks the necessary

---

[255] 9 November, 1808, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, 1807-1809*, 345; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), 1709; 15 December 1819, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States*, 1819-1820, 43.

[256] Treaty with the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks at Chickasaw Bluffs, 24 October 1801, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 1:648-49; Thomas Jefferson to the House of Representatives, 8 February 1802, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 1:656; Speech of Commissioners to the Chiefs of the Cherokees at Southwest Point, 4 September, 1801, *American State Papers, Indian Affairs,* 1:656-57.

information and explanations, the United States must have roads for the purpose of transporting the Ordnance and military stores from one military post to another, as occasion may require." However, many of the Creeks resented the increase in traffic through their lands. Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins reported that between October 1811 and March 1812, 233 vehicles and 3,726 people had passed the Creek agency on the Flint River headed west through Creek territory. Traditionalist Creeks, agitated over this threat to their way of life, became hostile. Several historians, including Albert J. Pickett, Michael Green, and Reginald Horsman, blame the construction of the federal military road for dividing the Creek nation physically and politically and for contributing to the outbreak of the bloody Creek War of 1813. More recently, Angela Pulley Hudson's *Creek Paths and Federal Roads* studies the issue in detail.[257]

Preparing for the Creek War of 1813, Governor D. B. Mitchell of Georgia corresponded with Tennessee governor Willie Blount and Secretary of War John Armstrong about the best way to get the troops to rendezvous in the Creek territory. Governor Mitchell wrote that he was "apprehensive that the want of roads by which to transport provision and ammunition will be a serious objection to the junction of the troops from the two states in the Cherokees. From Fort Hawkins in our state, there is an excellent road through the Creek Nation, passing in the immediate neighborhood of the hostile Indians, and this route would be infinitely the most convenient for our troops to march by." Mitchell told Secretary of War Armstrong that the best route for the Tennessee troops would be down "the Coosa River, which would place them in the

[257] Henry deLeon Southerland and Jerry E. Brown, *The Federal Road through Georgia, the Creek Nation, and Alabama, 1806-1836* (Tuscaloosa & London: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 35-36; Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 39-41; Horsman, *Expansion*, 162-65; Hudson, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads*.

rear of the Indians." Governor Blount responded that if the Georgia and Tennessee troops were to rendezvous, the best route through the Cherokee country would be "[a]cross the Tennessee river at Lowry's ferry, thence into the road leading from East Tennessee to Georgia, passing by where David McNair lives on Conasauga." Other letters discussed the troops from the two states rendezvousing at Turkeytown on the Coosa River (near present-day Gadsden, Alabama) in the Cherokee Nation. Although new military roads were recently opened through Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Cherokee lands, the military continued to have great difficulty in transporting supplies and men.[258]

At the end of the Creek War, Major General Thomas Pinckney sent terms of peace to Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins. These included reserving the right of the United States to establish trading houses and military posts and "to make and use such roads as they may think necessary, and freely to navigate all the rivers and water courses in the Creek territory."[259]

One of the greatest advocates of building military roads through Indian Territory was General Andrew Jackson. Construction of a road from Nashville to Madisonville, Louisiana, through Choctaw territory began in June 1817 under Jackson's supervision. He selected sites for military posts and, along with General John Coffee, assisted in the survey of the road and laying out one hundred townships. The road crossed the Tennessee near Florence, Alabama, and intersected the Gaines Trace near Russelville, Alabama. Completed in 1820, Jackson's Military Road shortened the distance from Nashville to New Orleans by two hundred miles and the travel

---

[258] *Communication from His Excellency Governor Mitchell to Both Branches of the Legislature of Georgia, at the commencement of the Session in November 1813* (Milledgeville: S & F Grantland, Printers, 1813), 12-13, 16-18, 26-29.
[259] Thomas Pinckney to Benjamin Hawkins, 23 April 1814, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, 1:857-58.

time by several days. The new route improved mail service from Washington and commerce between Tennessee and New Orleans, and facilitated the deployment of military troops. As a cotton producer who shipped his crops to New Orleans by steamboat, Jackson likely benefited from the construction of the road when water levels on the rivers made passage impossible.[260]

Turnpikes

Some historians refer to the years from 1800 to 1830 as the "turnpike era" in the United States. Local governments and corporations hastily built roads during the first three decades of the century. The southern states lagged behind New England for several years. For example, North Carolina built only twelve turnpikes before 1810. By contrast, New England and New York constructed approximately 317 turnpikes by 1811. However, turnpikes and toll roads played an important part in the South through the antebellum era.[261]

On March 8, 1813, the Cherokees signed an agreement at the Cherokee agency at the Hiwassee garrison giving permission for a turnpike company to cut a road through the Cherokee Nation. The route stretched from Tennessee to the Tugaloo River in the northeast corner of Georgia. Both Cherokees and white businessmen from Georgia composed the turnpike company. The agreement stated that the turnpike should revert to the Cherokees after twenty years. The

---

[260] Andrew Jackson to George Graham, 11 June 1817, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs,* 2:142; Andrew Jackson to Major William O. Butler, 14 August 1816, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, 2:119-20; Andrew Jackson to Livingston, 24 October 1816, *Papers of Andrew Jackson*, 4:71-72; Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, 117; Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822-1832*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 2:131-33)

[261] Alan D. Watson, "Battling "Old Rip": Internal Improvements and the Role of State Government in Antebellum North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 77 (April 2000), 194-96.

turnpike company was authorized to open public houses along the road and to open ferries as needed for the operation of the turnpike.[262]

Construction of the Unicoi Turnpike took approximately three years and roughly followed an old Cherokee trade path, the Wachesa Trail, which was the main route from the Great Indian War Trail and the Overhill towns to the Valley and Lower towns. In North Carolina and Georgia, the Wachesa Trail connected with major trade paths, including those to Charleston, South Carolina. The Unicoi Turnpike ran from the Overhill village of Chota, through Cane Creek, Tellico Plains, Coker Creek, and Unicoi Gap in Tennessee, to Unaka and Hayesville in North Carolina. In Georgia, the turnpike ran through Hiwassee, the Unicoi Gap of Georgia, the Nacoochee Valley, Toccoa, and the Tugaloo River. In 1821, Baptist missionaries traveling from Philadelphia to the Cherokee Valley towns in North Carolina traveled the Unicoi Turnpike in Conestoga wagons. Federal forces also used the turnpike to bring 3,000 Cherokees from North Carolina to camps at Charleston, Tennessee, during the 1838 removal. Today, several roads and highways closely follow portions of the Unicoi Trail.[263]

The opening of the turnpike in 1816 greatly increased the traffic through the Cherokee Nation. Horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry produced in Tennessee and Kentucky were driven to markets in Georgia and South Carolina. Freight wagons carried commercial goods from Georgia

---

[262] Cherokee Treaty, 1 March 1819 at the Cherokee Agency, Hiwassee Garrison, *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, 2:189.

[263] Brett Riggs and Lance Greene, *The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina: An Inventory of Trail Resources in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon, and Swain Counties*, revised report submitted to the National Park Service, Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Research Laboratories of Archaeology and the Trail of Tears Association, North Carolina Chapter, 2006), 46, 49; Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas,* 87, 542; William E. Myer, "Indian Trails of the Southeast," *Forty-second Annual Report of American Ethnology, 1924—*25 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1928), 772.

to markets in Maryville and Knoxville, Tennessee, then returned with lumber, iron, cured meats, hides, and beeswax. The turnpike company had the right to open stock stands with stores, taverns, and inns along the turnpike to service the commercial traffic. The white operators of the Unicoi Turnpike were obligated to pay the Cherokees an annual stipend for use of the road through their country. However, during the 1820s, other turnpikes were opened across the Southern Appalachians and the traffic on the Unicoi Turnpike diminished. The operators allowed the turnpike to fall into disrepair and apparently never paid the Cherokees the $160 per year due them. On January 29, 1829, John Ross wrote to Secretary of War Peter B. Porter about the turnpike: "The Unicoi Turnpike Company having failed to Comply with the requisitions of their agreement with the Cherokee Nation for several years, the Agent was instructed by the Secry. Of War to institute a suit against the Company for the recovery of the annual stipend due the Nation, but has never complied with the instructions." Superintendent of Indian Affairs Thomas L. McKenney replied, "The government can give no aid in the prosecution of the case of the Cherokees against the Unicoi Turnpike Company as it was not a matter to which the United States was a party."[264]

In 1821 the Tennessee legislature, followed by that of North Carolina in 1824, passed acts authorizing the Great Smoky Mountain Turnpike Company to open a road from Sevierville in Tennessee through the Cherokee mountains to Haywood County in North Carolina. Tennessee directed that the eastern terminus should be somewhere between the foot of the Smoky Mountains and the mouth of Soco Creek in Haywood County. North Carolina directed that the

[264] Riggs and Greene, *The Cherokee Trail of Tears,* 46-47; John Ross, et. al. to P. B. Porter, 29 January 1829 in Moulton, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 149-51; Thomas McKenney to John Ross, et. al., 4 April 1829 in Moulton, *Papers of Chief John Ross,* 158-59.

turnpike should run "to or near Abraham Wiggins's, on Deep Creek, in Haywood County." The mouth of Soco Creek is on the Oconaluftee River in the heart of present-day Cherokee, North Carolina, while Deep Creek empties into the Tuckasegee at Bryson City. Had this turnpike been built in1824, it would have cut through the heart of the lands occupied by the North Carolina Cherokees. The Cherokees had already ceded the lands, but hundreds still lived in the area that would later become the Qualla Reservation.[265]

Turnpikes were often a source of contention between whites and Cherokees. On October 30, 1819, the Cherokee Nation passed legislation regulating the construction of turnpikes within the boundaries of the Nation. The law was in response to complaints by several Cherokees about "a certain company of persons having formed a combination, and establishing a turnpike arbitrarily, in opposition to the interest" of the complainants. The new turnpike, which ran from "the forks of Hightower and Oostenallah river at Wills creek by way of Turkeytown" was allegedly in direct competition with a "privileged turnpike on the same road" owned by the people who lodged the complaint. The legislation abolished the new turnpike and also declared that "no person or persons whatsoever, shall be permitted to cut out any road or roads leading from any main road now in existence, so as to intersect the same again and to the injury of the interest of any person or persons residing on said road, without first getting an order from the National Council for the opening of said road; and person or persons violating this decree, contained in the foregoing resolution, shall be subject to such punishment and fine as the

[265] *Laws of North Carolina*: *1824*, 29-35.

National Council and Committee may hereafter decide and inflict, on such case as may be brought before them for trial."[266]

The following month, a white woman living in the Cherokee Nation by the name of Ann E. White addressed a letter to President James Monroe requesting his protection for her turnpike. She feared that the eastern Cherokees planned to force all white families from the nation "without making them any satisfaction for the improvements they have made." Asking Monroe to guarantee her right to stay in order to maintain her hotel and the turnpike on which it was located, White also agreed to move out of Cherokee territory if the Cherokees promised to compensate her for all of her improvements. White argued that her improvements were very valuable because "the roads from Chattahoochy to Tennessee River are in very indifferent order, insomuch that it is almost impracticable to carriages to pass, and quite so in safety." The description of the location of White's turnpike suggests that it is not the turnpike in the center of controversy which caused the turnpike law to be passed.[267]

In 1828, the Cherokee National Committee and National Council strengthened their control over turnpikes, tollgates, roads, and ferries by passing an amendment to the 1819 law. The new law stated that a permit from the Cherokee Council was required to open any new road regardless of whether it was a turnpike. Any road opened without a permit since the 1819 law was subject to closure by the sheriff of the district or the marshal of the Nation. Violators brought to court were fined $100. Any property belonging to the violator could be seized and sold to pay the fine.[268]

---

[266] Cherokee Nation, *Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 7-8.
[267] Ann White to James Monroe, 15 November 1819, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 4:413-14.
[268] Cherokee Nation, *Laws,* 105-106.

Water Routes

In addition to being dependent on roads through Indian lands for transporting goods to market, southerners also used waterways through Cherokee and Creek lands. White and Cherokee residents of north Alabama, north Georgia, and Middle or East Tennessee used the Tennessee River to ship goods to New Orleans. However, this route involved shipping goods down the Tennessee to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Because of the distance and many obstructions including the Muscle Shoals, residents living on or near the upper Tennessee and its tributaries sought new routes. In 1812 *Niles' Weekly Register* reprinted an article which originally appeared in the Nashville *Clarion* arguing for the acquisition of West Florida from the Spanish in order to be able to import goods from Mobile Bay through the Creek and Cherokee nations to the Hiwassee River and ultimately the Tennessee River. One of the proposed routes was up the Alabama and Coosahatchee Rivers and over the ten-mile portage to the Hiwassee River. This is the same portage area described in the story of the keelboat at the beginning of this chapter. A second proposed route ascended the Tombigbee to a fifty-mile portage overland to Bear Creek, then entered the Tennessee River below the Muscle Shoals. The writer of this proposal pointed out how wonderful it would be to have European goods imported to Tennessee via this method. He also wrote, "Imagination looks forward to the moment when all the Southern Indians shall be pushed across the Mississippi: when the delightful countries now occupied by them shall be covered with a numerous and industrious population; and when a city, the

emporium of a vast commerce, shall be seen to flourish on the spot where some huts, inhabited by lawless savages, now mark the junction of the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers."[269]

Because of navigation difficulties including the Muscle Shoals, the Tennessee River was slower than some other Mississippi and Ohio tributaries to develop a thriving commercial traffic. This hampered the commerce of East Tennessee and kept the region economically backward. For many years the Tennessee River remained a minor outlet for steamboat operations. The first steamboats on the lower Tennessee began operations about 1817. However, Florence, Alabama, was not reached by steamboat until 1821. The Knoxville Steamboat Company, which attempted to raise capital in 1825 to bring steamboats to the upper Tennessee, failed financially. The first steamship to reach Knoxville, the *Atlas*, arrived in 1828; however, it never returned. Later that year, a Knoxville company succeeded in building a small steamboat and placing it into operation. It was several years before this steamboat was joined by others. By the time of the Cherokee removal in 1838, several steamboats had made their way to the upper Tennessee and were used in that tragic undertaking.[270]

The Muscle Shoals, a thirty-seven-mile series of rapids located on the Tennessee River, were the most serious navigational obstruction in the Ohio river system. Ascending the rapids was nearly impossible and only a few steamboats made the attempt. Descent of the rapids was possible for only about one month of the year when the water level was at its annual peak. Small steamboats reached Florence and Waterloo, the main ports on the lower Tennessee, only five or

---

[269] "The Floridas," *Niles' Weekly Register*, 26 September 1812, reprinted from the *Nashville Clarion*; *Map of the Country Belonging to the Cherokee and Creek Indians*.

[270] Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 39-40, 234; Stanley John Folmsbee, *Sectionalism and Internal Improvements in Tennessee, 1796-1845* (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1939), 11.

six months each year. On the upper Tennessee above the shoals, small steamboats operated up to nine months per year. An additional problem with navigation from New Orleans to the Cumberland or Tennessee Rivers was that the Ohio River was often closed by ice. Steamboats could navigate the Lower Ohio River below the falls at Louisville for less than six months per year which prevented access to the mouths of the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers.[271]

Medium-sized steamboats (200 or 300 tons) traveling on the Mississippi or Ohio Rivers could travel upstream at an average speed of five to seven miles per hour. On many tributaries of these two rivers where smaller steamboats were required, such as the Tennessee River above Muscle Shoals, steamboat travel was even slower. Although these rates appear slow by modern standards, they represented a significant improvement over the speeds obtained by keelboats or stage coaches. The cost of steam transport downstream was about one-fourth to one-third the cost of shipping freight upstream. Rates for shipping by flatboats were lower than by steamboats. Shipping by steamboats did not reduce freight costs as much as it reduced time, especially when shipping items upstream.[272]

The role of the steamboat in the development of the western United States has long been recognized. Nineteenth-century European and American writers commented on how the steamship transformed the primitive Western wilderness into a region of growing commerce. In 1841, one American wrote, "Steam navigation colonized the West! It furnished a motive for settlement and production by the hands of eastern men, because it brought the western territory nearer to the east by nine-tenths of the distance."[273]

---

[271] Hunter, *Steamboats*, 186-87, 221-23, 234.
[272] Hunter, *Steamboats,* 25.
[273] Hunter, *Steamboats*, 27.

Before the arrival of the steamboat, the settlements around Nashville relied on goods shipped upstream from New Orleans by keelboat. The 1,250-mile voyage to Nashville by way of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Cumberland Rivers required seventy-five to ninety days. A round trip between Nashville and New Orleans took as long as five months. As early as 1816, an attempt was made to raise funds for investing in a Nashville-to-New Orleans steamboat service. However, the first steamboat, the *General Jackson*, did not arrive in Nashville until the summer of 1818. Large steamboats operated at Nashville six months each year. Difficulties in shipping products from Middle and East Tennessee and north Georgia and north Alabama remained a serious problem long after the arrival of steamboats.[274]

Canals

Beginning about 1790, improvements in transportation became a priority for many Americans. Macademized roads, canals, locks, and other internal improvements garnered attention from businessmen and political leaders. States began investigating how to fund internal improvements and they set up boards dedicated to the problem. Responding to the success of canal building in Europe, Americans investigated many plans to improve commerce through the use of canals. From about 1790 to 1830, the United States experienced a surge in canal building. While the southern states were slower to respond to the transportation revolution than their New England counterparts, the South did begin examining the use of canals to connect rivers and to bypass the Muscle Shoals in the Tennessee River. In 1786, South Carolina chartered a private

[274] Hunter, *Steamboats*, 38, 223.

company to construct a canal between the Cooper and Santee Rivers. This twenty-mile-long canal was finished in 1800 and was the second canal in the country.[275]

Americans developed many grand schemes for building canals to connect rivers. Most of these schemes were designed to make it cheaper and easier to transport goods from the interior to the major seaports. An April 1828 report by General Alexander Macomb, Jr., the chief engineer of the Corps of Engineers, reported that since 1824, the Corps had investigated, surveyed, or begun work on nearly one hundred internal improvements projects. These included thirty-four canals. One proposal was to build a canal over or near the old portage place in the Cherokee Nation that had been used for years to connect the Tennessee, by way of the Hiwassee and Ocoee, to the Conasauga, Coosawattee, and Coosa Rivers. This is the same portage area mentioned earlier in the keelboat story. An 1826 report of the chief engineer of the Department of War listed the canal between the Coosa and Tennessee Rivers as a project to be investigated. The canal and river route would cut through the heart of the Cherokee nation and provide access to the Gulf at Mobile by way of Head-of-Coosa (renamed Rome, Georgia, in 1834), and Turkeytown and Double Springs in Alabama (now called Gadsden) and Montgomery, Alabama.[276]

In November 1828, General Macomb's annual report listed several new surveys that were conducted at the order of President John Quincy Adams under the 1824 Survey Act. Two of these surveys examined the feasibility of building canals or railroads between the Tennessee

---

[275] David Kohn, ed., *Internal Improvements in South Carolina: 1817-1828* (Washington D.C.: private, 1938), introduction.

[276] Forest G. Hill, *Roads, Rails & Waterways: The Army Engineers and Early Transportation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 21, 58-59. *American State Papers: Military Affairs,* Vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1860), 358-60; *Map of the Country Belonging to the Cherokee and Creek Indians.*

River and the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. Connecting the Tennessee with the Savannah would allow Middle and East Tennessee farmers to ship goods to market via Augusta and Savannah while a connection with the headwaters of the Altamaha would provide access to the Atlantic by way of Macon and Milledgeville. The most direct route for either project ran through the Cherokee Nation.[277]

In 1830, the Board of Internal Improvement renewed efforts to improve navigation of western rivers. The Board authorized studies for canals at the Louisville falls on the Ohio and Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee. Secretary of War John Eaton noted that the removal of snags and other obstructions from the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers brought immediate benefits in the forms of increased commerce and lower insurance rates. These transportation improvements aided commercial traffic for large western regions including Middle and East Tennessee. But even with these improvements, the transport time of goods shipped from East Tennessee, in particular, by way of the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi to New Orleans remained lengthy.[278]

Cherokee Industry and Transportation in the Early 1800s

Little correspondence among Cherokees exists indicating how they transported their products to market or how they took advantage of strategic commercial locations on rivers in the early 1800s. Most information comes from Anglo-American sources. In a report from Return J. Meigs to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun dated 15 November 1819, the Cherokee agent discussed the Cherokee's choice for a new capital. The brief discussion suggests that the Cherokees may have chosen to establish their new capital, New Town or New Echota, at a place

[277] Hill, *Roads*, 59.
[278] Hill, *Roads*, 169-70.

conducive to commerce. The site was located at the junction of four roads that connected the town to the rest of the Cherokee Nation and where the Conasauga and Coosawattee Rivers join to form the Oostanaula River.

> The Cherokees here have fixed on a piece of ground on Oostinalee [Oostanaula] River at the confluence of this river with the Cannasaga [Conasauga] river, from whence the navigation to Mobile Bay is practicable. A number of large Boats with flour & whiskey have descended this water to Mobile the last season. It is believed that with little expense in removing some obstruction, this navigation for large Boats may be of very great use to all the upper country on or near its waters.[279]

The Cherokees produced several commodities for trade, including corn, wheat, livestock, and domestic hides. Some cotton was produced for the New Orleans market, but that crop was not as widely cultivated in the Cherokee nation as it was in regions to the south. Most Cherokee trade was conducted overland with neighboring states. Dr. Elizur Butler, a missionary at Haweis mission near Head-of-Coosa (present-day Rome, Georgia), reported on the trade conducted by the Cherokees:

> Last season, while traveling on the frontiers of Georgia, I well recollect seeing wagon loads of corn going from the nation to the different states. Droves

[279] Return J. Meigs to John C. Calhoun, 15 November 1819, *Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 4:411-13; Wilms, "Cherokee Indian Land Use," 54.

> of beef cattle and hogs are driven annually from this nation to the different states. A few weeks since, not less than 200 beeves were driven from this vicinity to the northern market; and I think as great numbers were collected in previous years.[280]

Many of the beeves driven from the Cherokee nation were sent to Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Georgia. Drovers from outside the nation in Kentucky and Tennessee brought hogs, horses, and mules through Cherokee lands to Georgia. The Cherokees profited from this migration by supplying large amounts of corn for the livestock and food and lodging to the drovers.[281]

Many Cherokee villages were established at the intersection of transportation routes. In the late eighteenth century, the Chickamaugans established towns on each side of the Tennessee River Gorge, a steep-sided canyon formed by the Tennessee River as it cuts its way through Walden's Ridge on the Cumberland Plateau. The canyon, which separates Signal Mountain on the northern side from Raccoon and Lookout mountains to the south, forms a natural gap in the mountains. A number of Indian trade paths were established through this gap. One of the busiest of these paths was the Great Indian War Trail, also known as the Great Indian War Path. The trail ran from Virginia and East Tennessee to Alabama. The Chickamauga Path entered the area from north Georgia and led to Kentucky. The Cisca and Saint Augustine Trail connected Middle Tennessee with Florida.[282]

---

[280] Wilms, “Cherokee Indian Land Use,” 34, 36-37.
[281] Wilms, “Cherokee Indian Land Use,” 37, 91.
[282] Myer, "Indian Trails of the Southeast," 732, 746-47, 846-49.

When the Chickamauga Cherokees moved into the area, the mountains and the turbulent waters of the Tennessee River Gorge provided protection for their lower towns and enabled them to control traffic through the area. In the early 1800s, several Cherokees established farms and industries along the river's banks.[283]

In 1815, John Ross asked his brother, Lewis Ross, to join him in his trading firm after the death of his original business partner, Timothy Meigs. Lewis Ross managed operations at the firm's office at the Hiwassee Garrison, while John Ross moved back to his childhood home at Ross's Landing. Ross constructed a ferry and warehouse on the south bank of the Tennessee River where several of the Indian trails converged with the river on the east side of the gorge.[284]

In 1837, George Featherstonhaugh, a visitor in the area, described his arrival at Ross's Landing in a journal:

> After some time, they ran the canoe ashore at a beach where there was no appearance of a settlement, and told me that it was Ross' Landing. I was somewhat dismayed at first at the prospect of being abandoned on a lone beach, since these men having fulfilled their agreement had a right to be paid immediately, and time was important to them to get back that night. Upon parleying with them, however, I learnt that there was a small settlement not far from us, and that they would carry my luggage there for a reasonable gratification. Upon which I sent them immediately on, and taking a last look at the river followed the road they took. At length I came to a small village hastily built, without regard to order or streets, every one selecting his

[283] Woodward, *The Cherokees*, 97, 100.
[284] Moulton, *John Ross, Cherokee Chief*, 8-9.

own site, and relying on the legislature of Tennessee to pass a law for the permanent arrangement of their occupations.[285]

Featherstonhaugh's account of his arrival at Ross's Landing describes an event that happened repeatedly in the early South. As Native Americans ceded lands to Anglo-Americans, whites moved quickly into Native villages located at strategic transportation hubs. Frequently, these Indian villages were located along the fall line of rivers and rapidly grew into thriving commercial towns. Georgia towns founded along the fall line of major rivers include Augusta on the Savannah, Macon on the Ocmulgee, Milledgeville on the Oconee, and Columbus on the Chattahoochee River. In Alabama, Montgomery was founded a few miles south of the fall line on the Alabama River and Tuscaloosa was founded on the Black Warrior River. Many other thriving white settlements such as Rome, Atlanta, and Chattanooga grew up where Indian trails met with strategic river ports. Land speculators and hopeful new white residents began moving into Ross's Landing immediately after the Treaty of New Echota was signed in December 1835. The first post office at Ross's Landing was opened in March 1837 by mercantilist John P. Long. In the summer of 1838 before all Cherokees were removed, the new white "founding fathers" voted to rename the town Chattanooga. The Tennessee General Assembly officially recognized the name in December 1839. In 1836 a group of leaders drew new civil districts for Hamilton County that incorporated the ceded lands around Ross's Landing. This was two full years before the Cherokees were forcibly removed. Trails, creeks, rivers, and industries bearing Cherokee or other Indian names, such as Chickamauga and Ooltewah Creeks and Ross's and Vann's Ferries,

[285] Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage,* 2:210.

appear on the map drawn by B. B. Cannon, which defined the new civil districts. Cannon speculated in land on the Tennessee River in Vann's Town (named for Joseph Vann, the wealthy mixed-blood plantation owner of Springplace, Georgia, it was renamed Harrison by the whites) and Ross's Landing areas in order to take advantage of the financial opportunities afforded by the Cherokee removal. In 1837, shortly after organizing the First Regiment of Tennessee Volunteer Infantry to aid with Cherokee removal, he led a detachment of voluntarily enrolled Cherokees on a northern route through Kentucky, Illinois, and Missouri to Arkansas. This route later became known as the Trail of Tears. Meanwhile, Chattanooga and other cities incorporated in Cherokee territory after the 1838 removal such as Charleston, Tennessee and Rawlingsville, Alabama, vied for railways and the economic growth they were expected to bring.[286]

During the 1820s and 1830s, it fell under the responsibility of Principal Chief John Ross and members of the Cherokee Council to act as mediators between the Cherokee Nation and the federal government in disputes regarding intrusions on their land by whites and valuations of property of emigrating or forcibly displaced Cherokees. Lucrative commercial properties located along rivers and roadways were often the subject of dispute. In 1824, Ross, Major Ridge, George Lowry, and Elijah Hicks addressed a letter to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun requesting resolution of several disputes including one surrounding a ferry on the Chattahoochee. "We will also imbrace the opportunity to report the forcible occupancy of the North Western Bank of Chatahoochee ferry, by a man named Wynne, a citizen of Georgia, this ferry is known by the name of Vann's ferry. It is established on the Federal road. The occurrence took place a

[286] Ulrich Phillips, *History of Transportation*, 6-9; Govan, *Chattanooga Country*, 102-109; James L. Douthat, ed., *Hamilton County, Tennessee 1836 Tennessee Civil Districts and Tax Lists* (Signal Mountain, Tenn.: Mountain Press, 1993), 1 ff.; Rozema, *Voices from the Trail of Tears*, 79-92.

considerable time past . . . . The emoluments arising from this ferry, which the nation has been deprived of, by said Wynn, is noted by the ferryman who lives at the place."[287]

Several of the more successful businessmen in the Nation owned ferries, including John Brown, Joseph Vann, Major Ridge, and John Ross. In 1833, when white intruders confiscated Ross's lands at the Head of Coosa, the value of Ross's ferry far exceeded the value of his other possessions. Ross's two-story main house with basement and brick chimney earned an evaluation of $3,500 while his ferry was appraised at $10,000. Ross's other property, including outbuildings, fields, orchards, and slave quarters brought his property valuation up to $16,097. One reason his ferry was so valuable was that it earned a net income of $1,000 per year.[288]

Another lucrative enterprise that caused disputes between Cherokees and their neighbors was the operation of taverns located on busy roads. In 1825, Ross wrote to Cherokee agent Hugh Montgomery about taverns owned by two white men. "Various & Repeated Complaints have from time to time been laid before the [Cherokee] Council against the locations of Jacob M. Scudder & James Cowen in the Cherokee Nation as publick housekeepers, the former under the garb of licensed Trader, has for a considerable time past been engaged in keeping a house of entertainment at the forks of the Tennessee & Alabama Roads, east of the Hightower River, in opposition to & prejudicial to the Interests of the Native Citizens occupying Stands near that place. The latter (as you may have learned) has been keeping a publick house at the agency (Charleston, Tennessee) and cultivating lands in that vicinity."[289]

---

[287] John Ross, et. al to John C. Calhoun, 13 January 1824, *Papers of Chief John Ross,* 56-57.
[288] Property Appraisal for John Ross, 16 December 1836, *Papers of Chief John Ross,* 465-66.
[289] John Ross, A. McCoy, Elijah Hicks to Hugh Montgomery, 27 December 1825, *Papers of Chief John Ross,* 109-10.

Secretary of War Calhoun instructed agent Montgomery to remove James Cowan "but no sooner done than he (colo. Montgomery) placed Mr. Hardwick (his own son-in-law) in possession of the premises from which Mr. Cowan had been removed, who still continues to live there and to cultivate the lands of the nation."[290]

State Support for Internal Improvements

Prior to 1815, North Carolina left the responsibility for internal improvements to private enterprise. However, a North Carolinian by the name of Archibald Murphey was concerned that in the past twenty-five years more than two hundred thousand North Carolinians had left the state and moved to the river valleys of the Ohio, Tennessee, and Mobile. Murphey complained that although North Carolina openly accepted the importance of internal improvements, the state failed to act to support them.[291]

In 1816, Murphey proposed that the state appropriate $150,000 per year for seven years to fund internal improvements. He recommended that the bulk of the money be used to fund navigation improvements with the balance spent to construct good roads through Cherokee country and across the mountains. Murphey felt that these western roads would not only assist the western citizens of North Carolina but would attract trade from East Tennessee and Virginia to the valleys of the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers.[292]

In 1819, the North Carolina legislature authorized the use of proceeds from the sale of former Cherokee lands to capitalize the internal improvements fund. Two years later, it

[290] John Ross, et. al. to Andrew Jackson, 6 April 1829, *Papers of Chief John Ross*, 159-60.
[291] Watson, "Battling "Old Rip,"" 185; Archibald D. Murphey, Wm. Henry Hoyt, ed., *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey* (Raleigh: E.Z. Uzzell & Co., 1914), 20-22.
[292] Murphey, *Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, 184-86.

augmented the internal improvements fund with dividends from state-owned stock in banks. These "Cherokee bonds" were used to fund other internal improvements projects. For example, in 1839, a new road from Franklin to Murphy through newly acquired Cherokee lands was allocated $2,000 in bonds raised from the sale of Cherokee lands. On 4 January 1839, the North Carolina legislature ratified an amendment to use the Cherokee bonds to help fund the Fayetteville and Western Railroad.[293]

Public works progressed faster in South Carolina than in the other southern states. In 1817 the state started an ambitious program of state-operated internal improvements. The legislature appropriated $1 million to fund improvements over the next four years. The canalization program in South Carolina continued in earnest until shortly after 1827, when the age of railroads arrived. That year South Carolina authorized its first railroad company and by 1830 the railroad was in partial operation; when completed in 1833, it became the South's first. As soon as the Charleston and Hamburg Railroad demonstrated the viability of shipping goods to market, all the prominent merchants, politicians, and military leaders of the South began to plan ways to connect roads, canals, and new railroads to the Charleston and Hamburg line.[294]

In 1820 the Board of Public Works, with Joel R. Poinsett as president, took over the internal improvement projects of South Carolina. Poinsett oversaw the clearing of rivers in South Carolina to make them navigable. Reports published in 1820 while Poinsett was president of the Board of Public Works outline ambitious plans to make as many streams navigable as possible and to build roads from North Carolina and the mountains to the rivers of South

[293] Watson, "Battling "Old Rip,"" 189; *Laws of North Carolina*, 1819 (Raleigh: Thomas Henderson, 1820), 7; *Laws of North Carolina*, 1838-39 (Raleigh: J. Gales & Son, 1839), 36-37.
[294] Kohn, *Internal Improvements*, Introduction.

Carolina in order to attract trade from Tennessee and North Carolina to Charleston. One proposal even suggested a series of canals west of the mountains to connect the Ohio River valley, the Cumberland River, and the Tennessee River with the rivers of South Carolina to divert trade from New Orleans to Charleston. Poinsett would later serve as Secretary of War during the Cherokee removal.[295]

Although severely hampered by vast areas occupied by Cherokees and Creeks within its state boundaries, Georgia also established plans to improve transportation. Established in 1825, the Georgia Board of Public Works' mandate was to improve river navigation, canal construction, and railroad construction. One of the strongest supporters of internal improvements and, not coincidentally, one of the most vocal proponents of Creek and Cherokee removal was George Gilmer of Georgia. Gilmer served as governor of Georgia from 1829 to 1831 and then again from 1837 to 1839. From 1833 to 1835 he served in Congress, where he chaired the House Committee on Indian Affairs. While governor, Gilmer recommended that the state take control of the gold mines in Cherokee country. He proposed that the state use the income from the operations of the mines to "improve the public roads, render the rivers navigable, and extend the advantages of education." Georgia passed a law to take control of the mines in 1830. Like its neighbor North Carolina, Georgia used income from Cherokee lands to fund internal improvements.[296]

---

[295] Kohn, *Internal Improvements*, Introduction, 72-73, 76.
[296] *Biographical Directory*, 1064; George Gilmer, *Sketches of Some of the First Settlers of Upper Georgia* (Americus, Georgia: Americus Book Company, 1926), 284-85.

Railroads

When the Charleston to Hamburg Railroad was completed in 1833, southerners began to imagine ways to use the new technology to solve transportation problems across the region. The arrival of the railroad era caused the demise of the canal era in the South, which had never taken off as it had in the North. State internal improvements boards replaced plans to build canals with schemes to construct railroads. One example is Wilson Lumpkin's change of heart after visiting Cherokee country in 1826 to choose a route for a canal. Lumpkin, governor of Georgia from 1831 to 1835, served on Georgia's board of internal improvements before he became governor. While visiting the Cherokee country as a member of the board, Lumpkin spoke with Cherokee leaders at the behest of Governor George Troup (1823 – 1827) to prepare them for the idea of a complete removal from the state to land west of the Mississippi. Lumpkin spent twenty-five days with the state engineer, Hamilton Fulton, examining the country between north Georgia and the Tennessee River and looking for the best place for a canal to connect the rivers of the two states. They settled on a route near the McNair farm between the south fork of the Hiwassee River, which Lumpkin called the Amay, and the Conasauga River in Georgia. However, Lumpkin became convinced that the best solution was not a canal but a railroad.[297]

Lumpkin also recommended other means of connecting the Tennessee River with Georgia rivers. One idea was to build a hundred-mile canal from the Tennessee River to Will's Creek and the Coosa River in Alabama. He also recommended the construction of a road from the Chattahoochee to the Tennessee River. Concerning the road through Cherokee country,

[297] Wilson Lumpkin, *The Removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia* (NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1907), 1:37-42, 2:273; Wilson Lumpkin to Gen. D. Newnan, *Georgia Statesman*, 4 July 1826.

Lumpkin wrote, "the country abounds in fine timber, water, suitable stone for turnpiking, and masonry of every description."[298]

With regard to the fact that the Cherokees still resided in an area where Fulton and Lumpkin planned to put a railroad, Lumpkin wrote in his autobiography: "the resources of Georgia could never be extensively developed by well devised system of internal improvements, and commercial and social intercourse with other portions of the Union, especially the great West, until this portion of the state was settled by an industrious, enlightened, free-hold population." Lumpkin also stated in his autobiography that the "whole plan of this railroad was well matured in my mind in the year 1826, while taking a general reconnaissance of the State, with a view to entering on works of internal improvement, in company with Mr. Fulton, our first State Engineer, and before I commenced my systematic plan for the removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia, in the year 1827, in the House of Representatives, in the Congress of the United States."[299]

A year before the Treaty of New Echota was signed in late 1835, some Georgia citizens met to plan a railroad through Cherokee Territory. On July 19, 1834, the *Southern Banner* reported on this convention, held at Rome in Floyd County "for the purpose of taking into consideration, the practicability and importance of navigating some of our Western waters." The conveners, who included citizens of Floyd, Cherokee, Cass, and Paulding counties, wanted to use a railroad to connect western water routes with North Georgia. They appointed a committee to contact the United States engineer and assist him while he was in the area surveying the route for

[298] Lumpkin, *The Removal of the Cherokee Indians,* 1:37-42, 2:273; Wilson Lumpkin to Gen. D. Newnan, *Georgia Statesman*, 4 July 1826.
[299] Lumpkin, *The Removal of the Cherokee Indians,* 1:37-42, 2:273.

the Georgia Union Rail Road from Memphis to Augusta, Georgia. Supporters of the new railroad wrote in the *Southern Banner*, "No section of country between those distant points would be more immediately and more immensely benefited by the Rail Road, than the now Cherokee counties of this State. Their remote situation from trade, their productive soil, and their rapidly growing population, all call aloud upon the people of that section, to be up and doing, to prosecute with energy and zeal, the noble work contemplated by their late meeting."[300]

Meanwhile, in 1836, businessmen and other leaders in East Tennessee, mostly from McMinn County, formed a plan to build a railroad in the valley between the Great Smoky Mountains and the Tennessee River. The terms of its charter stated that the railroad would run from Knoxville south through the Hiwassee district to the Tennessee state line. They planned to hook up with the newly chartered Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad. The Hiwassee route ran through the Cherokee Nation; however, because of the recent Treaty of New Echota, the commissioners considered the removal of the Cherokees to be inevitable. One of the commissioners for the railroad, and one of the stockholders, was General Nathaniel Smith, the McMinn County resident and Tennessee militia leader who was appointed superintendent of the Cherokee removal.[301]

Grading of the road for the Hiwassee Railroad began in October 1837 two miles below Athens, Tennessee. The enterprise was initially called the Hiwassee Railroad but the name was later changed to the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad. The supporters of the Hiwassee Railroad learned of Georgia's plans to build a railroad, The Western and Atlantic, from central

---

[300] "Internal Improvements," *Southern Banner*, 19 July 1834, article reprinted from the *Georgia Journal*.

[301] James W. Holland, "The East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad, 1836-1860," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 3(January 1931): 89-91.

Georgia to the Tennessee River at Ross's Landing. They became concerned that the Western and Atlantic could destroy their railroad. In July 1836, supporters of the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad convened in Knoxville to gather interstate support for their new railroad and to discuss plans by the Hiwassee and Western and Atlantic Railroads to connect with their east-west route. Georgia representatives to the Knoxville convention pledged to connect the Western and Atlantic to the Hiwassee near the Cherokee council grounds at Red Clay. When the Georgia railroad announced plans to place the northern terminus at Ross's Landing, Hiwassee supporters argued that the terminus was too far west to connect with their railroad. The Western and Atlantic Railroad proceeded with plans for a terminus at Ross's Landing with the idea of an eventual branch line to the Hiwassee Railroad.[302]

Although the surveying and grading of the Hiwassee Railroad began months before the Cherokees were deported, the work went slowly and was abandoned altogether in 1839 after sixty-five miles were graded and a bridge was built over the Hiwassee River at Calhoun. The company renewed its effort in February 1848 under its new name of the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad. The railroad was finally completed in 1855.[303]

General Nathaniel Smith was not the only person directly involved in the Cherokee removal who was a stockholder in the Hiwassee Railroad, which cut directly through the Cherokee nation. Major Albert S. Lenoir, a member of the prominent Lenoir family of western North Carolina and East Tennessee, was also a stockholder. Lenoir was stationed at New Echota

---

[302] Holland, "East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad," 93-95; James Houston Johnston, *Western and Atlantic Railroad of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta: State of Georgia, 1931), 9-10, 23; Ulrich Phillips, *History of Transportation*, 182-84.
[303] Holland, "East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad," 95, 103.

in 1836 and 1837 as issuing agent and then at Ross's Landing in 1838. He kept informed on the progress of the railroad through letters from his family.[304]

One problem shared by all businessmen and politicians throughout the South who wished to build railroads was how to finance these massive projects. The cost of utilizing the new technology had to be offset by a reduction in transport times and expenses. How did southerners plan to pay for their railroad projects? Most hoped for a combination of public and private funding. In an ironic and sad twist, one railroad entrepreneur approached the Cherokees for funds to build a railroad that would cross Cherokee lands. In February 1836, a man named John Williams wrote U. S. Senator Willie P. Mangum to say that he had spoken with Colonel Gideon Morgan as Morgan was traveling to Washington. Colonel Morgan was a white man who was married to a Cherokee woman and lived among her people. During the Creek War of 1813-14, he led a detachment of Cherokees and was wounded. Williams suggested to Morgan that he meet with Cherokee leaders in Washington and speak to them about investing in the stock of the Charleston and Cincinnati Railroad using two or three million of the five million dollars they were to receive from the treaty signed at New Echota. Morgan apparently told Williams he would meet with the Cherokees and try to persuade them to use half their money to invest in a railroad they had not consented to and would never use. How the Cherokee Council received this proposal, if it was ever made, is unknown. However, this story demonstrates the audacity of white entrepreneurs in their quest to fund and build internal improvements across Indian lands.[305]

---

[304]Lenoir Family Papers II, #2262, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Wilson Library.
[305] John Williams to Willie P. Mangum, 6 February 1836, Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., *The Papers of Willie Person Mangum* (Raleigh, State Dept. of Archives and History, 1952), 2:387-88.

Conclusion

The Cherokees fully understood the importance of their taverns, ferries, roads, and waterways to not just their own people but to their white neighbors as well. In a letter to the United States House and Senate, Ross and the Cherokee Council protested the fraudulent Treaty of New Echota, which forfeited all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi in exchange for land west of the river. They listed many assets belonging to the Nation as proof that the Cherokee government would never agree to cede their homelands. The Cherokee protest rated the advantages of their location and transportation routes highly:

> The Cherokee Territory, within the limits of North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, is estimated to contain ten millions of acres. It embraces a large portion of the finest lands to be found in any of the States; and a salubrity of climate unsurpassed by any; possessing superior advantage in reference to water power; owing to the numerous rills, brooks and rivers, which flow from and through it; some of these streams afford good navigation, others are susceptible of being easily improved and made navigable. On the routes where roads have been opened by the Cherokees, through this country, there must necessarily pass some of the most important public roads and other internal improvements, which at no distant day will be constructed.
>
> There are many valuable public ferries also owned by the Cherokees, the income of some of them amount to from five hundred to one thousand, fifteen hundred and two thousand dollars per annum. Several public roads opened at

> private expense, were also kept by companies under regulations of the national council, and toll gate were erected on them. These regulations have all been prostrated by State Legislation, and the Cherokee proprietors thus deprived of their rights, privileges and property.[306]

Although the Cherokees were determined to hold on to their valuable lands, powerful forces were working against them. The white population of the early nineteenth-century South coveted Cherokee and Creek lands not just for the agricultural opportunities and homesteading opportunities these lands offered, and not just for the value of their gold mines, but also for their location along strategic transportation routes. Ferries and taverns located in Indian Territory along these routes offered lucrative economic opportunities. Many of the South's largest cities including Chattanooga, Augusta, Macon, and Columbus grew up on strategic transportation spots on newly ceded Creek and Cherokee lands. The early South's most prominent military and political leaders were proponents of or directly involved in internal improvements in Indian lands and were also involved in the ceding of these lands or the removal of the Creeks and Cherokees in the 1830s. These leaders included Jackson, Gaines, Poinsett, Gilmer, and Lumpkin. State militia officers and local families directly involved in the Cherokee removal speculated in railroads through Cherokee lands before removal. The military and political leadership of the South saw the Indians as obstacles in establishing postal and military roads, turnpikes, railroads, and water routes which they felt were crucial for military defense and economic opportunity.

---

[306] John Ross, et. al., to the Senate and House of Representatives, 21 June 1836, *Papers of Chief John Ross,* 441, 443.

After forcing the Cherokees to give up their lands, political leaders in the South used the income from the sale of those lands to finance internal improvements.

Chapter V

American Science, the Department of War, and Cherokee Removal

Introduction

As George Daniels explains in *American Science in the Age of Jackson*, Americans became increasingly interested in the study of science after the War of 1812. The study of the natural history of the interior of the United States had actually begun in earnest a decade earlier when the Lewis and Clark and Zebulon Pike expeditions caught the imagination of many Americans. Discoveries made on the expeditions overturned many scientific theories formulated in Europe and demonstrated a need to develop new classification systems for recently identified North American species. It was not until about 1815, though, when a younger generation of American leaders imbued with a new sense of national pride began to actively resent scientific advances made in Europe, that a significant movement to apply science and engineering to solve national and regional problems began. The War of 1812 contributed to this movement by exposing weaknesses in the financial, transportation, and defense systems of the young republic. For example, the war reinforced the importance of developing critical domestic industries like gunpowder and weapons production, so that the United States would not be dependent on European powers. The new generation of American leaders also began to look toward science and technology to solve problems with transportation in the western arena. They investigated

canal, railroad, and steamboat technologies for solutions to transportation problems inherent in western expansion.[307]

At the opening of the nineteenth century, the curriculum at most colleges like Harvard and Dartmouth focused on the classics and preparation of young men for the ministry, medicine, or teaching. The science of geology was in its infancy and engineering had not yet developed into a profession in America. Colleges in the United States slowly began to add to their science programs by recruiting scholars trained in Europe or Americans who were self-taught in the sciences. Two schools that led in the production of scientists were Yale, where Benjamin Silliman, a chemist and the editor of the *American Journal of Science and Arts,* taught many promising students, and West Point, which became a leader in training engineers and topographers for the military. The process of building geology, zoology, and engineering programs at American colleges was slow, and some members of the elite classes sent their boys to schools in Germany, Scotland, and France that offered more advanced scientific training.[308]

After the War of 1812, both Americans who had attended colleges with strong science programs and those who had not began to turn their attention to the investigation of natural and mechanical sciences. The founding of scientific societies and journals for the study of geology, botany, mineralogy, and zoology in unprecedented numbers reflected this new interest. Prior to 1815, only two general scientific societies, the American Philosophical Society (established in 1769) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (established in 1784), had been founded in America, and Samuel L. Mitchell's *Medical Repository* was the only scientific journal that attracted a national audience. By 1821, the number of scientific societies had increased

[307] Daniels, *American Science*, 8-10.
[308] Daniels, *American Science*, 222.

significantly, with New York claiming the greatest number at five, and the Middle Atlantic states having quadrupled the number of societies in that region between 1815 and 1825. The number of scientific journals increased from eleven in 1815 to twenty-four in 1825. Benjamin Silliman's quarterly *American Journal of Science and Arts*, founded in 1818, was one of the most important scientific periodicals of the era because of both the national scope of its coverage and audience and its longevity. Silliman's journal published several articles on the southern gold region which alerted whites to the mineral wealth of the Southern Appalachians.[309]

The first scientific journals in South Carolina and Georgia were published prior to 1805; however, eight more journals were established in Georgia between the years of 1835 and 1849 while South Carolina added four between 1825 and 1849. Tennesseans established three journals between 1830 and 1849. Still, the South lagged behind New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, and Ohio in establishing scientific periodicals, partly because of delays in settlement west of the Alleghenies.[310]

Because American universities lagged behind their European counterparts in establishing schools for science and engineering during the first half of the nineteenth century, scientific inquiry into geology, agriculture, linguistics, and many other disciplines was led primarily by laymen with little or no formal education in the fields that they were investigating and who earned their livelihood in other professions. Many of these early leaders in scientific investigation became interested in multiple areas of study and did not limit their research to a single field. For example, George W. Featherstonhaugh investigated linguistics and geology while Stephen Long became fascinated with topography, geology, and mechanical and steam-

[309] Daniels, *American Science*, 3, 8-9, 13-15, 17-18, 31.
[310] Daniels, *American Science*, 229.

powered engineering. Many of America's leaders were involved in agricultural research and publication including Governor George Gilmer of Georgia, who served as president of the Agricultural Association of the slaveholding states, and Secretary of War John Armstrong, Jr., who wrote articles on advances in agricultural science and advocated the founding of a state-supported agricultural school in New York.[311]

Government-funded science and technology projects during this period favored pursuit of practical solutions to concrete problems over strictly theoretical problems. Political and constitutional concerns required that state geological surveys and federally-funded exploring expeditions must be justified in utilitarian terms rather than purely for the sake of scientific knowledge. For example, a military or defense benefit had to be demonstrated to win legislative authorization for expeditions of exploration. Scientific inquiry into geological strategraphic formations was performed under cover of internal improvements projects deemed commercially beneficial to the public, as in the case of New York geologists who used canal survey projects as opportunities to study the elevation of rock formations. In a similar case of mixed motives, Thomas Jefferson convinced Spain to allow an American expedition to explore the valley of the Missouri River by claiming that the explorers would "have no other view than the advancement of geography." While this explanation was satisfactory to the Spanish, Jefferson offered a more practical reason for the exploration to Congress: the goal of the expedition was to steal the Indian trade on the Missouri from the British.[312]

---

[311] George Gilmer, *Sketches,* 455; C. Edward Skeen, *John Armstrong, Jr., 1758-1843: A Biography* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1981), 214.
[312] Daniels, *American Science*, 19, 21, 24-25.

Mining, road, canal, and railroad construction and advancements in agriculture all took hold first in the North, then spread to the South where leaders like John C. Calhoun and Georgia Governor George Troup sought ways to use science and technology to solve transportation and mining problems. Because of a shortage of American scientists, they looked to engineers and scientists who were either born or educated in Europe for the expertise to solve their commercial problems. Southern leaders such as Andrew Jackson and Edmund Pendleton Gaines, who had direct connections to the Department of War, also looked toward the Corps of Engineers for the necessary expertise to resolve mining and transportation problems. These problems included internal improvements and gold mining projects in Cherokee country. The fact that the Cherokees still occupied the lands that southern business, military, and political leaders wanted to have surveyed for transportation routes or mining opportunities did not deter them or the engineers they recruited.

Although the South trailed the North in scientific education and application of technological advances, it did lead the nation in state-funded mineralogical surveys, which were prompted partly because of its deposits of gold but also due to problems of soil exhaustion. North Carolina was the first state to order a geological survey. It began in 1821 and was led by Denison Olmsted, a former student of Benjamin Silliman at Yale and the professor of chemistry, geology, and mineralogy at the University of North Carolina from 1817 to 1824. As discussed in Chapter 3, Denison's survey focused on North Carolina's gold region. South Carolina followed this example, and in 1824 a survey was led by Lardner Vanexum, who graduated from the Paris School of Mines and served as professor of geology at South Carolina College. He held the first chair of geology ever created at a state-supported school. Other states soon undertook their own

surveys: Massachusetts in 1830; Tennessee in 1831; Maryland in 1834; Virginia, New Jersey, and Connecticut in 1835; and Georgia and New York in 1836. The first federal survey, authorized by the Topographical Bureau of the Corps of Engineers in 1834, was led by George W. Featherstonhaugh and covered several southern states and Indian territories.[313]

In 1831, the Tennessee legislature authorized the appointment of Gerard Troost as the state's first official geologist and mineralogist. Troost was a Dutch physician, pharmacist, and geologist who had moved to Nashville from New Harmony, Indiana in the late 1820s. He opened a natural history museum in Nashville before joining the faculty of the University of Nashville, where he was a professor of mineralogy, geology, and chemistry and taught the state's first course in geology. The legislature ordered its new geologist to make a geological survey of the state with a view to develop its mineral resources. Troost was also appointed as the state's assayer. By 1836, Troost had conducted three surveys mapping resources in Tennessee including the coal region which he identified as running from Cumberland Mountain in Kentucky to Monte Sano at Huntsville, Alabama. In October 1836, the state asked Troost to travel to the Ocoee District to survey the lands which had recently been ceded by the Cherokees in the Treaty of New Echota. Troost and his field assistants performed this survey despite the fact that the

---

[313] Oakeshott, "Contributions of the State Geological Surveys: California as a Case History," 323, 326; Anne Millbrooke, "South Carolina State Geological Surveys of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Geological Sciences in the Antebellum South,* edited by James X. Corgan (University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982), 26-28; Michele L. Aldrich and Alan E. Leviton, "William Barton Rogers and the Virginia Geological Survey: 1835-1842," in *The Geological Sciences in the Antebellum South*, edited by James X. Corgan, 83-104 (University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982), 83-87; Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Berkeley, *George William Featherstonhaugh, The First U. S. Government Geologist* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 114-15; George W. Featherstonhaugh, *Excursion through the Slave States,* Vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1844).

Cherokees still lived there. The report called attention to areas well-suited to agriculture and the mineral resources that offered opportunities for exploitation such as gold, roofing slate, marble, limestone, graphite, and iron. To the disappointment of the state legislature, Troost determined that gold prospects in the Ocoee District were minimal and less valuable than in neighboring states. At the time of the survey, most of the gold washings were abandoned and Troost met only two prospectors working on Coqua Creek. He also examined the region's topography looking for transportation routes from North Carolina and Georgia to the Ocoee District. Tennessee, like other states, was anxious to learn what natural resources could be found in the Cherokee lands and was eager to use new advances in science to do so.[314]

This was an era when southern leaders believed that newly discovered advances in technology must be used to exploit all the natural resources of the fledgling republic so that problems in western expansion, defense, and commerce could be conquered. It is within this

[314] "An Act to appoint a Geologist, Mineralogist, and Assayer for the State of Tennessee," 21 December 1831, in *Public Acts Passed at the Stated Session of the Nineteenth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1831* (Nashville: Allen A. Hall & F. S. Heiskell, 1832) 43-44; "A resolution providing for a mineralogical survey and examination of the Ocoee District", 24 October 1835, in *Public Acts Passed at the Called Session of the Twenty-first General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1836* (Nashville: S. Nye and Company, 1836) 12-14; Gerard Troost, *Fourth Geological Report to the Twenty-second General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, made October, 1837* (Nashville, TN: S. Nye and Co., 1837); Gerard Troost, *Third Geological Report to the Twenty-first General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, made October, 1835* (Nashville, TN: S. Nye and Co., 1835); James X. Corgan, "Early American Geological Surveys and Gerard Troost's Field Assistants," in *The Geological Sciences in the Antebellum South*, edited by James X. Corgan (University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982) 41-44, 48; Charles W. Wilson, Jr., *State Geological Surveys and State Geologists of Tennessee* Bulletin 85 (Nashville: State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Geology, 2002); *A History of the Development of the Division of Geology, Department of Conservation*, Bulletin 81 (Nashville: Tennessee Division of Geology, 1981), 1-3; Corgan, *Geology in Antebellum Tennessee*, 32.

environment of burgeoning interest in scientific and technological advances in mining and transportation that events leading to Cherokee removal took place.

Edmund Pendleton Gaines and Transportation Systems for National Security

As discussed in the previous chapter, one reason whites wanted to build roads through Cherokee territory was for military purposes. Edmund Pendleton Gaines, who spent most of his fifty-year U. S. Army career on the frontier, was the leading advocate for construction of military roads in the United States. Gaines's military assignments included service in the Mississippi Territory, in the 1812 campaign around Lake Erie, and alternating commands of the Eastern and Western Departments of the Army with Winfield Scott for ten years. This service on all parts of the changing American frontier made him one of the most influential military leaders in terms of shaping the borders of the United States, and no one was better qualified to assess the problems of travel west of the Alleghenies or the need for internal improvements to expedite military response and promote commercial transportation.[315]

Gaines was born in Virginia in 1777, but he grew up on the western North Carolina and East Tennessee frontiers. As a teenager, Gaines accompanied Tennessee's John Sevier on a raid against the Cherokees during the last days of the Cherokee wars of the 1790s. Gaines studied law but did not attend university. He joined the U. S. Army in 1799 as a regular soldier but he quickly became involved in the study of the topography of the Southeast while mapping roads, surveying borders, and building fortifications.[316]

---

[315] James W. Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines: Frontier General* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 33, 109; Zella Armstrong, *Notable Southern Families,* Vol. 1 (1918. Reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1974), 90.
[316] Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, xi, 2, 5.

In 1801 and 1802, Lieutenant Gaines led a survey party of ten companies in the construction of the Natchez Trace military road through Choctaw and Chickasaw territories. After the Natchez Trace assignment, he spent two years surveying Choctaw boundaries. In 1806, Captain Gaines received orders to map a four-foot-wide post road from Athens, Georgia, to Ft. Stoddert in the Mississippi Territory above present-day Mobile to alleviate numerous problems with mail delivery to and from the Mississippi Territory. The road passed through the Creek village of Coweta in the heart of the Creek Nation while skirting south of the Cherokee Nation. The Creeks, like the Cherokees before them, opposed the construction of roads through their lands, but the post road was completed in 1807, at which time Gaines reported to the postmaster general that "the Indians are not well disposed" to it.[317]

Gaines subsequently commanded at Fort Stoddert, and he received his first assignment in Cherokee territory in the summer of 1807 when Secretary of War Henry Dearborn ordered Gaines to study the Indian lands between the navigable waters of the Tombigbee River and the Tennessee River. In the winter of 1807-1808, the exploratory party traveled through land claimed by the Cherokees, Creeks, and Chickasaws to determine the feasibility of establishing transportation routes through the Indian lands to promote commerce between Tennessee and the Gulf of Mexico. At the end of the mission, Gaines filed a lengthy report detailing the soil and timber resources, geographical features, and possible road locations. Unlike his experience on the post road, the Creeks that he met on this expedition seemed well-disposed to the idea of a road from the Tennessee to the Tombigbee. Gaines hoped to establish a permanent home on the

[317] Gideon Granger to President Jefferson, 4 August 1806, Wheaton Papers, MS#1124, University of Georgia; Edmund P. Gaines to Postmaster General, 1 April 1807, Wheaton Papers; Southerland and Brown, *Federal Road*, 133; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 6-7, 15.

Mobile River and believed that the new road, which became known as the Gaines Trace, would become a major commercial transportation route serving Tennessee residents seeking to export and import products through the port at Mobile, which at this time still belonged to Spain.[318]

In 1810, Secretary of War William Eustis ordered Gaines to survey another route from Tennessee to Mobile using the Alabama and Coosa rivers. This new route was intended to provide access from East Tennessee to Mobile beginning at Hiwassee in the Cherokee Nation. After beginning his survey, Gaines and his party were captured by Creeks who wanted to stop the project. They objected to anyone chopping trees in their country or performing other tasks associated with road surveys and they were concerned about whiskey shipments down this new route. Gaines and his men were taken to Hickory Ground where a council of Creek leaders refused to allow Gaines to continue. Gaines returned to Fort Stoddert vowing to renew the survey at a later date, but an insurrection of American frontiersmen who wanted to take Mobile from the Spanish and the ensuing war in West Florida interfered with his plans. Gaines also took a leave of absence in the spring of 1811 to obtain a license to practice law. The agent to the Creeks, Benjamin Hawkins, reported to Eustis in March 1812 that another party was nearing completion of the road to Tennessee.[319]

---

[318] Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 19-20.

[319]Benjamin Hawkins to Edmund P. Gaines, 25 October 1810, in *Letters, Journals, and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins*, edited by C. L. Grant, (Savannah, GA: The Beehive Press, 1980), 2:574-75; Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, 19 November 1810, in C. L. Grant, 2:577; Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, 24 February 1811, in C. L. Grant, 2:583-85; Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, 9 March 1812, in C. L. Grant, 2:602-603; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 22-25, 28-29; Hudson, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads,* 83-4.

There is some confusion among historians about the location of the route. Gaines biographer James W. Silver places the beginning of the route at the Chickasaw Old Fields on the Tennessee River in north Alabama. Angela Pulley Hudson does not commit to a location for the northern end of the path and states only that the route led to Tennessee. Editor C. L. Grant seems to

During Gaines's military career in the Southeast, he oversaw the construction of many other military roads including roads in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida built during the Seminole wars. During the First Seminole War, Gaines served under General Andrew Jackson and faced myriad difficulties moving supplies. In 1818, for example, while rushing to get provisions to Jackson who had abandoned his supply wagons because of poor roads, Gaines's boat hit a snag in the Flint River and sank. Three soldiers were drowned, and Gaines and the rest of his men trudged half-naked through thick undergrowth for six days to reach Jackson's camp in a starved condition. This and other experiences traveling in Indian territory reinforced for Gaines the need for good roads. When Gaines's men were not attacking the Seminoles or transporting supplies, they kept busy with other duties. As James W. Silver explains in his biography of Gaines, "the soldiers themselves were never to be allowed to become idle, for there was always work to be done in building and repairing barracks as well as the forts themselves, roads to be opened and kept in order, and, in some instances, crops to be raised." One such project was a ninety-mile military road through Creek lands from Fort Montgomery in Alabama to Fort Scott on the Flint River near the

---

believe that the Hiwassee referred to in Benjamin Hawkins's letters was a Cherokee town located in northeast Georgia near the North Carolina state line. (See map of the "Southeastern Frontier circa 1814" in the back of Grant's volume 2). This writer was not able to identify a Hiwassee town in north Georgia. However, a small town by the name of Hiwassee was located near Murphy, North Carolina at the junction of Peachtree Creek and Hiwassee River. (See James Mooney's *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas*, 512). The better known Greater Hiwassee or Hiwassee Old Town was located on the Hiwassee River in Tennessee. Hawkins's letters repeatedly mention Hiwassee as the northern terminus of the intended route; but, the letters are not clear if he is referring to the Hiwassee River or the town. Greater Hiwassee was an important eighteenth century Cherokee town; however, the town was burned more than once in the eighteenth century and by 1799 had ceased to be a significant settlement except for its location on the Warrior's Path. Although Greater Hiwassee consisted of only a few scattered farms in 1810, it is possible that it was the intended beginning point of the road to Mobile. It is also possible that the Cherokee Agency, located at the mouth of the Hiwassee River from 1807 to 1816, was the intended origin of the route. It is unlikely that Hawkins was referring to the smaller Hiwassee town in North Carolina because such a route would not benefit Tennesseans.

confluence of the Flint, Chattahoochee, and Appalachicola rivers in southern Georgia. Gaines was also involved with implementing postal service for the Florida frontier and with providing military escorts for state and federal surveying parties.[320]

Although Gaines was not part of the Corps of Engineers or a trained topographical engineer, he continually strived to increase his topographical expertise by studying the region in which he was serving. He made notes about timber and other resources required for building roads and observed the weather, terrain, and other factors that might affect water or overland transport. He instructed his men to conduct surveys of the St. Johns River in East Florida, of Okefenokee swamp, and of the region between Mobile and Amelia Island. Pensacola Harbor was also examined with the goal of establishing a future fort. These detailed reports were forwarded to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun who was very pleased to receive all such topographical intelligence. Calhoun, like Gaines, believed that rapid transportation and communications systems were critical for the defense of the country from both Indians and foreign powers. And both men advocated federal involvement in internal improvements.[321]

---

[320] Andrew Jackson to John C. Calhoun, 26 February 1818 and 25 March 1818, *American State Papers, Military Affairs* 1:698-99; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 77; David A. Mitchell, Indian Agent, to George Graham, Acting Secretary of War, 14 December 1817, *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 1:688-89. For more information on how the daily duties of United States Army soldiers contributed to the opening of frontiers to white settlement, see Francis Paul Prucha's *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860*.

[321] Edmund Pendleton Gaines to John C. Calhoun, 30 January 1818, *American State Papers, Military Affairs* 1:694; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 85.

Gaines's Vision for a National Defense System

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Congress resisted increases in the size and costs of the regular army because of budgetary concerns and also because of the perception that a standing army was a threat to the freedom of the nation. Because of the small size of his command, Gaines found it necessary to move his men repeatedly from one theater of war to the next. Gaines was also dependent on the willingness of state governors to call up their militia for duty in places far away from home. The poor condition of roads, bridges, and waterways frequently hindered the deployment of manpower and supplies. When waterways were navigable, they were the fastest mode of transportation. For this reason, Gaines always looked for new methods and technologies which could improve transportation. He supported the use of the steamboat for navigation of the nation's rivers and the use of federal resources to clear its rivers of snags. In 1823, he proposed a new system for the elimination of sawyers and planters in the Mississippi River. In justifying the expensive process of clearing the Mississippi for military needs, Gaines highlighted the fact that commercial interests would also benefit: "The Mississippi river, since its current has been conquered by steam has become something more than a nursery for American seamen, and more than a highway of nations to a people of the western states—it is the only outlet, and therefore an indispensable outlet, for the productions of near half the United States . . . ." Gaines also strongly advocated the construction of canals and turnpikes for defense purposes.[322]

In 1833, Gaines sent a proposal to General Alexander Macomb for the construction of five new forts on major rivers that would complete a line of communication and defense for the western frontier. Gaines updated this plan many times over the years and by 1838, it called for the

[322] Edmund Pendleton Gaines, report on a tour of inspection, 1826-27, *American State Papers, Military Affairs* 4:104-105; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 236-37.

construction of eleven forts from Lake Superior to the mouth of the Sabine River and new roads and railroads to connect them. Gaines argued that rapid transportation systems for troop deployment were vital given the vast expanse of territory and the relatively small number of troops available to guard it.[323]

Gaines's proposal for defending the interior by building a series of posts was part of a larger plan for the complete defense of the United States. This plan included the placement of floating batteries carrying 120 to 200 cannons each off the coast to protect against foreign naval attacks. These batteries would be towed by steamboats. Gaines, a great supporter of steam power, believed that it should be used to defend against America's enemies, whom he believed would soon build great steam-powered fleets that could easily attack the nation's coastal fortifications. Gaines also actively promoted the construction of a series of railroads to crisscross the nation and to serve a triple purpose: rapid transportation of supplies for the military, transport of military personnel, and promotion of commerce. As part of his plans to incorporate new technology into the national defense system, Gaines believed that the United States was bound "to be preserved, expanded, and immortalized by steam power" and he advocated the establishment of new military mechanical and engineering schools to supplement the number of engineers produced by West Point and more rapidly incorporate the new technology into United States defense systems.[324]

---

[323] Edmund Pendleton Gaines, *Memorial of Edmund Pendleton Gaines to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled* (Memphis, TN: Enquirer Office, 1840); Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines,* 217, 219, 222.
[324] Gaines, *Memorial of Edmund Pendleton Gaines;* Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines,* 227.

Gaines and the Western Railroad

Many American leaders recognized that England's steam-powered rail technology held potential for solving the young nation's transportation problems. Gaines was one of the earliest and strongest advocates for rail technology in the United States. In 1830, he became involved with plans to build a railroad from LaGrange to Memphis, his primary residence, and he foretold that a rail line through one of the state's richest cotton regions would boost his town's importance as a cotton port. The next year, supporters of the Memphis railroad crafted plans to connect the railroad to the proposed rail system around Muscle Shoals in Alabama.

When the Charleston to Hamburg Railroad was completed in 1832, many southerners began to envision a railroad that crossed the entire region and connected ports on the Atlantic with the Mississippi River. The advantages of such a system were many. Regions like Tennessee, Kentucky, and north Georgia, which had great difficulty shipping products across the eastern continental divide to the Atlantic market, would soon be able to do so. At the same time, farmers west of the Alleghenies could ship items to new markets in the ever-expanding west. It was foreseen that railroads would provide a cheaper, faster, and more reliable method of transport than steamboats. An Atlantic to Mississippi River rail system would also improve communication, promote industry, and enable emigration. And of most importance to Gaines, it would modernize frontier defenses.

In late 1833, Gaines and supporters of the Memphis railroad held a convention at the new town of Bolivar, Tennessee to discuss plans for a rail system from Memphis to the Atlantic. As one of the commissioners for the new railroad, Gaines was instrumental in convincing the Tennessee General Assembly to authorize $500 towards a survey. A lack of engineering expertise presented problems, though, in establishing a southern rail system, and a shortage of steam and rail engineers

led southern leaders to look for experienced engineers from England and the United States military. The 1824 Survey Act authorizing federal resources for internal improvements would only allow the use of a topographical engineer for surveying railroad routes, and would not allow the loan of engineers to oversee railroad construction. So Gaines became determined to obtain the services of an army topographical engineer to conduct the survey. He was able to use his high-ranking position in the army to secure the services of Colonel Stephen Harriman Long, a gifted and experienced member of the Corps of Topographical Engineers.[325]

Long's survey began in the summer of 1834. Long travelled to Courtland, Alabama and met with the officers of the Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad who supplied him with materials for the project. Gaines had arranged for the states of Tennessee and South Carolina to help pay Long's salary, but North Carolina and Georgia refused to chip in. Governor Wilson Lumpkin of Georgia wanted a more southern route that would run through central Alabama and Georgia to Savannah. After Long surveyed a route through Cherokee lands, Gaines ultimately arranged for Long to survey a more southern route and to have his expenses paid by the Atlantic and Mississippi Railroad. Long also surveyed a route from Memphis over the Cumberland Plateau to connect with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which was under construction and for which Long had served as the original engineer. Long and Gaines envisioned a railroad system that would eventually connect the Chesapeake Bay with the Mississippi by way of the

---

[325] Railroad Committee to the President (Jackson), 5 November 1833; James W. Silver, "Edmund Pendleton Gaines: Railroad Propagandist," *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 9 (1937): 7, 8; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines,* 241-43; "An Act to appropriate five hundred dollars to the survey of a railway from Jackson to the Mississippi River," *Public Acts Passed at the First Session of the twentieth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, 1833 (Nashville: Allen A. Hall and F. S. Heiskell, 1833), 91; Ulrich Phillips, *History of Transportation*, 304-306; Hill, *Roads*, 119.

Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. These additional routes were part of Gaines's plan for a national defense system with rail systems connecting all regions of the country. Gaines was enormously pleased with Long's work, and he sent a glowing report to Washington stressing the importance of an internal improvement project that would connect the Mississippi River and the Atlantic seaboard. Gaines saw the potential for railroads to revolutionize commerce but also the railroad's potential for military defense. He believed that railroads should be used to quickly transport troops to wherever they were needed. Referring to the British attack on Washington when the White House and U. S. Capitol were burned, Gaines wrote, "The immense importance of the work in a military point of view will be obvious at a glance at the probable, I may say – inevitable result of having had in the month of August 1814 such a work, with the means it must have afforded of 50,000 of the sharpshooters of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Western Virginia flying to the relief of the Capitol! saving it – and doing more – preserving the honor of the land of Washington."[326]

United States Senator John C. Calhoun and former United States Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina were also strong supporters of an east to west railroad project. They hoped the railroad would revive Charleston's floundering economy as well as contribute to a South-West political alliance. They disagreed, though, on where the western end of the east-to-west railroad should terminate. Hayne wanted a terminus in Louisville and one in Cincinnati so that the railroad could tap the Ohio River and the Northwest. At the request of Hayne and the South Carolina legislature, Secretary of War Lewis Cass sent several officers and the army's

[326]Ulrich Phillips, *History of Transportation*, 304-306; Hill, *Roads*, 119; Silver, "Edmund Pendleton Gaines," 7-8; Richard G. Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long: Army Engineer, Explorer, Inventor* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1966), 162-64.

geologist, George W. Featherstonhaugh, to accompany Colonel James Gadsden and Captain William G. Williams on a survey of the proposed railroad line. After the engineers determined the feasibility of crossing the Southern Appalachians, the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad Company was chartered in December 1835. In July 1836, a convention was held in Knoxville to encourage interstate support. Citing the report by William G. Williams of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, Hayne and the Knoxville Convention argued for a route from Knoxville through the mountains to Asheville, North Carolina using the French Broad River valley. In Tennessee, it would turn north and pass through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. As a result of the convention held in Knoxville in 1836, the South Carolina legislature set up a bank to fund the railroad via Hayne's French Broad route.[327]

In the summer of 1837, Williams returned to the mountains to do additional surveys for the route and took a young army lieutenant named John C. Fremont with him. Then, because of the knowledge they had gained about the Cherokee mountains while conducting surveys for the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad, Williams and Fremont returned again in the winter of 1837-1838 to do a military reconnaissance of the region in preparation for possible war with the Cherokees over their impending removal. Their reconnaissance work was confined to western North Carolina and East Tennessee where they mapped villages and transportation routes along the Nantahala and Hiwassee Rivers and other areas. Fremont, who later led great

---

[327] *Report of the South Carolina Commissioners to the Knoxville Convention, on the Subject of the Proposed Railroad from Charleston to Cincinnati and Louisville* (Knoxville, TN: Ramsey & Craighead, 1836); Editorial column, *National Banner and Nashville Whig,* 4 May 1836; Robert Y. Hayne, *Address in Behalf of the Knoxville Convention, to the Citizens of the Several States Interested in the Proposed Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad* (Charleston, SC: A. E. Miller, 1836); Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 262-64; William M. Meigs, *The Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*, 2 vols. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 2:360-62.

expeditions west of the Mississippi and became Military Governor of California, used this opportunity as a training ground on how to combine topographical surveys with reconnaissance of indigenous peoples. Fremont wrote of his experience in the Cherokee mountains: "here I found the path which I was 'destined to walk.' Through many of the years to come the occupation of my prime of life was to be among Indians and in waste places."[328]

Calhoun favored instead either of two routes that ran further south than Hayne's plans: one would pass through Cherokee country and the Muscle Shoals and terminate at Memphis; the other would pass through Cherokee country and Middle Tennessee, ending near the mouth of the Missouri River. To promote the Memphis route, in 1835 Calhoun urged the citizens of Shelby and Fayette counties of Tennessee to press for a railroad charter. A special act was passed by the state legislature on December 17, 1835 that chartered the LaGrange and Memphis railroad. The legislature required the company to raise two-thirds of the capital for the railroad and the state promised to supply the other third. Construction on the LaGrange to Memphis Railroad began in 1837, but the economic panic later that year contributed to the company's financial problems and put an end to construction. John Christmas McLemore, a resident of Nashville and close friend and confidant of President Jackson, hoped to get the failed railroad back on track. McLemore owned two hundred acres of land near Ft. Pickering south of Memphis and he urged the railroad company to purchase his land, sell lots with the goal of establishing a town that would compete

[328] John C. Fremont, *Memoirs of My Life*, 2 vols. (Chicago and New York: Belford, Clarke, & Company, 1887), 1:23-25.

with Memphis, and thereby raise some capital for the railroad. The company accepted McLemore's proposal, but the real estate venture failed along with the railroad.[329]

One of the problems with Calhoun's middle Tennessee route was finding a pass through the Southern Appalachians. In 1836, Calhoun and engineer James Gadsden explored the Carolina mountains looking for a pass with a grade that would accommodate a railroad. They identified a gap in the mountains between the Tuckasegee and White Water valleys that Calhoun named the Carolina Gap. The gap passed through the mountains at Whitewater falls near the North and South Carolina lines and ran through the Cashiers Valley. From the Little Tennessee River in North Carolina, Calhoun's and Gadsden's proposed route ran towards the Tennessee River at Kingston and eventually hit the Mississippi near the mouth of the Missouri. In South Carolina, the route followed the old Cherokee Trade Path to Charleston. Calhoun's proposed routes ran through the Cherokee Nation while Hayne's proposal skirted it.[330]

To the dismay of Hayne, Calhoun immediately began promoting his southern route by writing letters to friends and by arguing the case for his southern route in the *Pendleton Messenger*. Calhoun invited his friends to purchase stock in the railroad so they could gain control of the board of directors. However, the financial panic of 1837 put a damper on both

---

[329] T. D. Clark, "The Building of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad," 12-14, also see notes 17 and 18 on page 13; Andrew Jackson to John Christmas McLemore, 30 April, 1830, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, 8:219, also see note 4 on page 20.

[330] John C. Calhoun to Editor of the *Pendleton Messenger*, 22 September, 1836, *Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 1835-1837, 13:286-93; John C. Calhoun, "The Great Rail Road," *Niles' Weekly Register*, 8 October 1836; Meigs, *Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*, 2:360-62; N. W. Woodfin to D. L Swain, 2 October 1836, David L. Swain Papers, PC # 84, North Carolina State Archives.

men's plans. Hayne's railroad through the French Broad was not built until after the Civil War and Calhoun's Tuckasegee railroad was never built.[331]

Although there was wide support for a western railroad, the Memphis to Charleston railroad suffered many setbacks. Parts of the system, such as the Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad were completed in the 1830s. That railroad, built on former Cherokee lands to skirt the Muscle Shoals, was used in the late spring of 1838 to transport Cherokees in the removal. Other sections of the railway which Gaines hoped would become part of his great east-to-west rail system failed financially in the next few years. Gaines never ceased lobbying for either the Memphis to Charleston Railroad or his great national rail defense system. He wrote Congress, the War Department, and newspapers, modifying his proposals as circumstances changed. In 1839, Gaines sent a proposal to Congress that outlined seven major rail systems, one of which was a rail network from Memphis to Charleston with branches to Milledgeville, Georgia and east Florida. Like earlier Gaines proposals, this latest Memphis to Atlantic plan placed the railroad through the newly vacated Cherokee Nation.[332]

In 1845, two conventions were held in Memphis to revitalize the Memphis to Charleston railroad. The first, a small affair headed by Gaines, met on July 4. A larger national convention with six to seven hundred delegates began on November 14. Calhoun presided over the November convention, which was comprised primarily of cotton growers, and he pledged to press for federal aid to fund the internal improvement. Due in part to the Memphis convention, the Tennessee legislature granted a charter to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company on

---

[331] John C. Calhoun to Editor of the *Pendleton Messenger*, 22 September, 1836, *Papers of John C. Calhoun,* 13:286-93; Meigs, *Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*, 2:360-62; Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate*, 263.
[332] Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 251-52; Rozema, *Voices from the Trail of Tears,* 111.

February 2, 1846. The Memphis to Charleston Railroad was eventually completed in 1857 and Gaines's dream for a national rail system eventually became a reality, but not until long after his death in 1849.[333]

Gaines's Indian Policy

Gaines's strong support for internal improvements helps explain his seemingly contradictory actions in dealing with the Southern Indians and his views regarding Indian removal. In his biography of Gaines, James Silver argues that Gaines always treated the Indians with fairness and that he opposed removing the Indians to west of the Mississippi. He also argues that Gaines believed that the best course of action toward the Indians was to teach them skills to adapt to white man's civilization. Silver's interpretation is a little simplistic because Gaines's actions and words concerning Native Americans are not always in agreement with each other, and his policies towards them changed over time. It is important to try to understand his complex views, though, both because of Gaines's direct influence on military policy regarding the Southern Indians and because his attitudes provide clues into the reasoning of other southerners and military leaders.

In a letter dated December 4, 1818 to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Gaines discussed his feelings about using force against the Seminoles:

> I would much more willingly devote my time and humble faculties in the delightful occupation of bringing over savage man to the walks of civil life, where

[333]T. D. Clark, "The Building of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad," 15-16; James Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines,* 254-55.

this is practicable without force, than to contribute to the destruction of any one of the human race; but every effort in the work of civilization, to be effectual, must accord with the immutable principles of justice. The savage must be taught and compelled to do that which is right, and to abstain from doing that which is wrong. The poisonous cup of barbarism cannot be taken from the lips of the savage by the mild voice of reason alone; the strong mandate of justice must be resorted to and enforced.

After all that the wisdom and philanthropy of our country and Government, aided by millions of money, have yet been able to effect, it is a melancholy truth, that in no Indian nation within my knowledge, (the Chickasaws excepted,) has the scalping knife been laid aside for any considerable length of time, until their every hope of using it with impunity had been defeated.[334]

These words by Gaines, a frontiersman and long time Indian fighter, reflect the attitude of many southerners at the time. Although Gaines's career took him to many posts around the country including extended stays in Florida and the Mississippi Territory, Gaines always considered Tennessee his home. During the early part of his career, he maintained a home in Kingsport, Tennessee near the intersection of the Great Indian Warpath and the North branch of the Holston River. In 1815, he married his first wife, Barbara Grainger Blount, daughter of former governor of the Territory South of the Ohio River and former United States Senator from Tennessee William Blount. Barbara was also the niece of the then current governor of

[334] Edmund Pendleton Gaines to John C. Calhoun, 4 December, 1817*, American State Papers, Military Affairs,* 1:688.

Tennessee, Willie Blount, William's younger brother. Gaines counted many of the South's leaders among his personal friends and acquaintances including Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, James Monroe, and several Tennessee governors including John Sevier and the Blount brothers. Later in his career Gaines moved his primary residence to Memphis, and at one time he owned tracts of land in West Tennessee and East Florida worth $107,000.[335]

In addition to participating in raids against the Cherokees as a teenager, Gaines fought against the Southeast Indians in the Creek War of 1813 and in the First and Second Seminole Wars. In 1818, when Gaines wrote the above passage about the savage Indians, the massacre at Fort Mims and the bloody Creek War were still well-remembered by southerners. Only one Christian mission had been established in Cherokee territory, and it was run by the non-mainstream German Moravians. The Southern Indians, including the Cherokees, had begun to adopt white man's agricultural practices, but were still generally regarded by most whites as backwards savages. Gaines believed it was his military duty to fight the violent Indians who threatened western expansion and the security of the nation.

Gaines's attitude toward Native Americans changed somewhat over the next ten years. In a report on the Western Department in 1827, Gaines made recommendations about the treatment of the Indians which differed significantly from those of Jackson and many other leading southerners, especially Georgians. In the report he acknowledged that United States lands had actually belonged to the Southeast Indians since "time immemorial." He also acknowledged that Indians were capable of learning agricultural and mechanical arts and engaging in industry: "I

---

[335] Armstrong, *Notable Southern Families,* 32-37, 90; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 87; Nolan B. Harmon, *The Famous Case of Myra Clark Gaines* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), 227-28.

hold it to be the duty of every citizen of the United States to raise his voice, however feeble, in favor of the instruction and actual civilization of these Indians, and against their being driven from their home."[336]

What caused this change in attitude is not clear. It may be that Gaines could see the success of the federal civilization program and efforts by an increasing number of Christian missions to convert the "savages." Gaines's change in attitude had become apparent two years earlier when the controversial Treaty of Indian Springs was concluded in 1825. Gaines was ordered to investigate complaints by the Creeks about the circumstances under which it was signed. Although Gaines told the Creeks that there was very little chance that the treaty would be overturned, he also recommended to the federal government that the Creeks' appeal for an investigation of the proceedings be sustained. This angered Governor George Troup of Georgia to the point of calling for Gaines's arrest. Gaines's recommendation also caused concern for his old friend Jackson, but Jackson ultimately supported his friend and dismissed Troup's demands.[337]

In 1829, Gaines began to fall out of favor with Jackson, something that he attributed to the machinations of Secretary of War John Eaton. Gaines's belief that Indian removal was not necessary to achieve southern goals of progress was also a factor. By 1830, the general had become displeased with Jackson, believing that the main reason Jackson planned to run for a second term as president was so that he could complete the removal of the Indians. By 1832,

[336] Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 104-05.
[337] Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines,* 116-19, 124.

Gaines's alienation from the administration was complete, and he no longer supported Jackson's reelection efforts.[338]

Despite Gaines's attitude toward removal, the consummate soldier willingly engaged in war against Native Americans. He requested that he be sent back to Florida during the Second Seminole War (1835 – 1842) and he led military actions against Northern Indians, including a campaign during the Black Hawk War, which was ultimately a removal action. Although Gaines did not personally oversee arrangements for the removal of the Southeast Indians, as commander of the army's Western District, he oversaw the construction of forts, like Fort Smith in Arkansas Territory, that were used in the relocation of the eastern Indians. He was also responsible for the safe re-settlement of the Indians in the west, including the Cherokees. His younger brother, John Strother Gaines, was in charge of the Choctaw removal, and Edmund enabled this effort by constructing a road in northern Mississippi prior to their removal.[339]

In a court of inquiry on the conduct of Generals Winfield Scott and Edmund P. Gaines during the Second Seminole War, Captain Ethan Allen Hitchcock testified that Gaines always insisted on dealing honorably with Indians. Gaines's sense of honor dictated that when he dealt one-on-one with the Indians, he should treat with them honestly. However, Gaines's sense of honor did not stop him from trespassing on their lands in order to move troops and supplies to a theater of war or to cut roads through their lands without permission. As he stated in 1818, "the

[338] Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 137-38.
[339] Black Hawk, *Black Hawk's Autobiography,* Roger L. Nichols, ed. (1833. Reprint. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1999), xvii, 58 – 61; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines*, 140, 149.

savage must be taught and compelled to do what is right," and what Gaines and other white Americans believed to be right was the march of progress.[340]

With homes located on the Holston, which fed into the Tennessee River, and in Memphis, Gaines's success as a landholder, and that of his neighbors, was dependent on the success of commercial traffic on the rivers. Like most progressive southerners, he envisioned a commercially successful South built on a network of water, road, and railroad connections. The Indians stood in the way of those plans. While Gaines preferred to negotiate land cessions using strong pressure and force when necessary that would move the Indians onto smaller pieces of land in the east or allow them to remain on lands ceded to the federal government, as opposed to actual removal west of the Mississippi, the dutiful Gaines fully participated in the removal process as instructed by the President and the Secretary of War. Gaines built his career, his reputation, and his fortune on the systematic conquering of the western frontier.

Stephen Long and the Corps of Topographical Engineers

When Gaines brought in Colonel Stephen Long to survey sections of the Memphis to Charleston Railroad, he succeeded in obtaining the services of one of the army's most experienced western explorers and topographical engineers. Long boasted a lengthy resume that included many years of experience building internal improvements in Indian territories, and he was one of only a handful of American-born engineers with the skills and expertise required to survey thousands of miles of cross-country transportation systems. In many ways, Long was a model example of the second generation of Americans who were self-taught in new fields of

[340] Edmund Pendleton Gaines to John C. Calhoun, 4 December, 1817*, American State Papers, Military Affairs,* 1:688; Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines,* 188.

science and who looked for ways to apply new technologies and branches of science to internal improvement projects and western expansion. For both Long and the Topographical Bureau, work on the Memphis to Charleston Railroad was just one of the many projects through which they brought internal improvements to Cherokee country.

Stephen Harriman Long was born in 1784 in Hopkinton, New Hampshire. He attended Dartmouth where he studied the classics and excelled in mathematics. After graduation, he entered the teaching profession and dabbled in applied science as a hobby. As early as the War of 1812, Long became interested in hydraulic machinery and his experiments attracted the notice of Brigadier General Joseph Gardner Swift. As the Chief of Engineers, Swift was in a position to actively recruit Long for the Corps of Engineers. Long received notification of his appointment as second lieutenant in early 1815 and began his career with the military as a mathematics teacher at West Point.[341]

Long transferred to the new Bureau of Topographical Engineers in 1816 as a brevet major where his first assignment was to design an arsenal for Saint Louis. His second assignment sent him to the Illinois River and Lake Peoria to scout a site for a military post. This assignment meshed with the War Department strategy after the War of 1812 of establishing a system of fortifications along the frontier borders to reduce the influence of Britain and Spain on the Native Americans. In 1817, based on his surveys of the Illinois country, Long recommended the construction of a number of canals connecting the Great Lakes with the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Long reported on the status of the forts in the region, discussed the geology, soil, and forests, and suggested the possibility of establishing a system of roads and canals connecting the

[341] Roger L. Nichols and Patrick L. Halley, *Stephen Long and American Frontier Exploration* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 21-26.

eastern part of the country from Wheeling, Pennsylvania or the District of Columbia with the Illinois country. Long also reported that the indigenous peoples of the Illinois country were still loyal to the British, in part because the British gave them more presents than did the Americans.[342]

This survey of the Illinois country and the Indians who lived there was in many ways typical of the duties of the topographical engineers. Army topographers wore many hats: they acted as geologists, geographers, map makers, engineers, soldiers, and spies, and they provided all types of intelligence to Washington. Local surveyors who ventured into Indian territory to survey Indian-United States boundaries or state boundaries similarly became familiar with the topography of the area, the location and population of Indian villages, transportation routes, and soil and timber resources.

Long's survey of the Illinois country took place while he was serving under Andrew Jackson, commander of the Southern Division of the army. When acting Secretary of War George Graham ordered Long to complete his report in New York, where he would have access to topographical instruments, Jackson objected strenuously to the loss of his topographer and protested to Graham that Long had been sent on assignment to the Northern Division without his consent. Jackson complained to Graham that unless "topographical Engineers are kept at duty within their divisions in time of peace we cannot expect but little benefit from them in time of War." Jackson was not happy with Secretary Graham's reply and the disagreement escalated to involve President Monroe and others in the War Department including General Winfield Scott. Believing that he had been slighted by Graham and the President, Jackson threatened to resign

[342] Nichols and Halley, *Stephen Long*, 26, 28-30, 32-35; Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 41-42.

his commission. United States Representative John Rhea of Tennessee acted as an intermediary between the administration and Jackson and urged Jackson not to resign. Jackson did not resign and apparently decided not to hold any animosity towards his topographer: Jackson sent Long to Saint Louis on another assignment. Jackson understood the importance of having trained engineers who could scout the geography, transportation routes, locations of Indian villages and white settlements, possible locations for forts, and the political loyalties of the native populations in time of peace. Their reconnaissance missions helped politicians decide if indigenous lands held natural resources worth treating for and aided preparations for war.[343]

Long's lengthy career in the military took him on many important assignments in Indian country. Among these, he was ordered to scout the Missouri River and recommend locations for forts to control the Indian trade. In 1818, he received permission from Secretary of War John C. Calhoun to design and build a steamboat to explore the Yellowstone and the land between the Missouri River and the Rockies. Calhoun's orders to Long provided for a team of scientists to document the flora, fauna, and geology of the region. The team included a botanist, geologist, zoologist, naturalist, artist, two topographers, agent for the Missouri tribes, and a steam engineer. Calhoun also ordered Long to survey the lands that lay along the American and British borders and to "conciliate Indians by kindness & by presents and [to] ascertain as far as practicable the number and character of various tribes with the extent of the country claimed by each." During

[343] Andrew Jackson to George Graham, January 14, 1817 in The *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, 2:273-74; John Rhea to Andrew Jackson, 27 November 1817 in *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson,* 2:335-36; Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 42-43, 45.

the expedition, he traveled through Cherokee lands in Arkansas where they observed peace-making efforts between the western Cherokees and the Osages.[344]

In March 1823, the Chief of Engineers, Alexander Macomb, sent a letter requesting that Long undertake a mission to explore the Red River and the Rainy Lake areas near the forty-ninth parallel. Long's team included a zoologist, mineralogist, landscape painter, and the requisite soldiers. One notable member was James Calhoun, a naval midshipman and cousin and brother-in-law of the Secretary of War. On this expedition, they collected specimens, exchanged goods with the Chippewa, and mapped the Winnipeg River. Calhoun, who served as the expedition's assistant topographer and astronomer, assisted Long in determining the border between Great Britain and the United States at Pembina village on the Red River.[345]

In 1825, shortly after Congress passed a law authorizing the Corps of Topographical Engineers to become involved in non-federal internal improvement projects, Long became involved in river navigability. He also began working on road and canal surveys and bridge design. In 1827 and 1828, he worked with three army and civil engineers surveying the route of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, designing bridges for the railway, and writing a railroad construction manual based on his B&O experience.[346]

In 1831, the Tennessee Legislature established a Board of Internal Improvements. At its first meeting in January 1832, the new board asked President Jackson to appoint Colonel Long to

---

[344] Edwin James, compiler, *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains*, 2 vols., 1823 (Reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1966), 1: Preliminary Notice, pp. 3-4, Chapter 1, pp. 2-4, 2:267-79; Nichols and Halley, 62-64, 71-76; Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 54-55, 73-74.
[345] Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 121- 141; Nichols and Halley, *Stephen Long*, 185, 201, 205.
[346] Stephen H. Long, *Railroad Manual, or a Brief Exposition of Principles and Deductions Applicable in Tracing the Route of a Rail Road,* 2 Vols. (Baltimore: Wm. Wooddy, Printer, 1828, 1829); Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 145-49.

the task of improving the Holston and Tennessee Rivers from Knoxville to the Alabama state line. Long was assigned to the project and took two civil engineers and three engineers from the Corps of Topographers with him. The lands on the south side of the Tennessee River from the mouth of the Hiwassee to the state line all belonged to the Cherokees, but their permission to conduct the survey was not sought. The section of the river from Ross's Landing to the Alabama line was notorious for its sandbars, eddies, and whirlpools that carried colorful names such as "the suck" and the "boiling pot." Steamboats rarely traversed this section of the river. Instead, separate steamboats operated above and below "the suck" and the obstacles on the Tennessee River located near Ross's Landing. During the survey, one of the civil engineers, Philip R. Van Wyck, drowned while trying to swim through the Boiling Pot. Long recommended over $58,000 in improvements including straightening and deepening the channel, creating warping facilities, and constructing a sluice and dam. The work took several years to complete, but by 1835, steamboats were able to travel from Alabama to Knoxville when the water level allowed. The river navigation improvements not only aided commerce on the upper Tennessee River and its many tributaries, but made the Cherokee settlement at Ross's Landing more attractive to whites as an important transportation hub.[347]

Long and the Western and Atlantic Railroad

At the July 1836 convention held in Knoxville to discuss a trans-Appalachian railroad that would connect the west with the Atlantic, committees from Georgia and South Carolina

[347] Stephen H. Long, *Surveys of the Tennessee River,* Doc. No. 167, 29th Congress, 1st Session, 1831 (Reprint, Signal Mountain, TN: Institute of Historic Research, 1993); *Report of the Committee on Internal Improvements in the Senate of Tennessee* (Nashville: Hunt, Tardiff & Co. Printers, 1832); Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 152.

presented separate recommendations for the proposed route. The South Carolina delegation, headed by Robert Y. Hayne, favored a route from Charleston, crossing the Appalachians near Knoxville, then running toward Louisville and meeting the Ohio River at Cincinnati and Louisville. Georgians favored a route that crossed the Appalachians in north Georgia and ran toward Savannah. A compromise was reached that satisfied both committees: the main line of the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad would follow the South Carolina proposal and a future branch would be built that ran from Knoxville to central Georgia, the exact route to be determined at Georgia's discretion.[348]

In late 1836, another convention was held in Macon, Georgia, to continue the work started by the state's delegation at Knoxville. Those gathered sought to plan a line connecting this new Western and Atlantic railroad with the Charleston to Hamburg Railroad and other branches including one to Savannah. The convention wrote an open letter to the state legislature recommending that it commence a system of railway improvements by constructing a railroad beginning at the Tennessee line at or near Rossville and running it through the "Cherokee counties, on the most practicable route" to the Chattahoochee River. They also recommended that the legislature grant charters to create branch lines from this new railroad to run to Columbus, Forsyth, Athens, Milledgeville and other places in Georgia.[349]

---

[348] "The Report of the Committee of Forty-Five," *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, 18 July 1836, reprint from *Knoxville Register*; Ulrich B. Phillips, *History of Transportation*, 181-84; *Report of the South Carolina Commissioners to the Knoxville Convention*; Robert Y. Hayne, *Address in Behalf of the Knoxville Convention;* Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 189-190.
[349] "Memorial to the Georgia Legislature," *Southern Banner*, Athens, 3 December 1836; Johnston, *Western and Atlantic Railroad,* 8-11, 27; Ulrich B. Phillips, *History of Transportation*, 181-84, 307-9.

The idea for using a railroad to connect the Tennessee River to other waterways in Georgia was an old one and pre-dated Gaines's idea for a Memphis to Charleston railroad. As early as 1825, Governor Troup signed an act authorizing the newly created Board of Public Works to look for the best route to build a canal or railway from the Atlantic coast or waters emptying into it towards the Tennessee River. The ultimate goal was to join the waters of the Atlantic and the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. The legislature declared that the survey should be conducted as soon as possible. The same day that Georgia authorized the survey for an Atlantic to Tennessee River route, which would necessarily pass through the heart of the Cherokee Nation, Troup signed an act incorporating the Mexican Atlantic Company, which planned to build a canal or railway through Creek lands from the Atlantic to the Gulf. Nothing came from these 1825 plans, but in 1836, with improved railroad technology and the newly signed Treaty of New Echota as incentives, Georgia was ready to revive plans for a railroad through the Cherokee mountains.[350]

In December 1836, the Georgia legislature incorporated the Western and Atlantic Railroad and appropriated funds for a survey from the Chattahoochee River to Rossville, Georgia, on the Tennessee state line. In June 1837, a group of hopeful white citizens of Tennessee met at Ross's Landing in the Cherokee Nation and drafted a letter to Georgia Governor William Schley requesting that the railroad be extended to the landing on the Tennessee River. As explained in the previous chapter, immediately after the Treaty of New

[350] "An act to lay out a central canal or railway through this state," 24 December 1825, "An act to create a Board of Public Works," 21 December 1825, and "An act incorporating the Mexican Atlantic Company," in *Compilation of the Laws of the State of Georgia, Passed by the General Assembly since the Year 1819 to the Year 1829*, William C. Dawson, ed. (Milledgeville: Grantland and Orme, 1831), 90-94.

Echota was signed in December 1835, whites began moving into Ross's Landing and began land speculation in the new town. These speculators gambled that the railroad would increase property values and that the increased commerce flowing down the Tennessee River to connect with the railroad would boost their plans to promote the town. Georgia's newly-elected governor George Gilmer sent General Daniel Newnan to Nashville to see the Tennessee governor about permission to build the northern terminus at the Tennessee River, but the Tennessee legislature was slow to respond and permission for the Georgia-based Western and Atlantic to enter Tennessee was delayed.[351]

In 1837, the Corps of Engineers was still in the habit of granting leaves of absence to its topographical engineers to perform services for state and private projects that required engineering expertise that was difficult to obtain elsewhere. Because this project was backed by many powerful southern leaders like Gaines, Calhoun, and Hayne, it was not difficult for Georgia to obtain the services of Stephen H. Long. In 1837, Long moved to Georgia to begin surveying the route for the Western and Atlantic railroad. He became a resident of the state and was given the title of chief engineer of Georgia. The survey began in May on the Etowah River in the Cherokee Nation. Long finished the first phase of his work in the fall when he prepared a report for Governor William Schley. The route he mapped ran from Terminus, Georgia (later renamed to Marthasville then Atlanta), northwest through the Cherokee Nation and the gold region to the Tennessee state line. In his report, Long waxed prophetic about the significance of the railroad and its potential to increase commerce and revitalize the entire South. Long praised the ability of the Western and Atlantic Railroad to repopulate and reclaim "the worn out and

[351] Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 190, 194; "Memorial to the Georgia Legislature," *Southern Banner*, 3 December 1836; Johnston, *Western and Atlantic Railroad,* 8-11, 27.

deserted fields everywhere to be met with in the older parts of all the Southern States, by industrious white inhabitants who 'will replenish the waste places' and restore fertility to the exhausted glebe."[352]

Long continued his survey work during the winter of 1837-38, and by the end of January the Tennessee legislature had granted the railroad access to the Tennessee River. Most of the route surveyed for the railroad lay inside the Cherokee Nation. Long became very familiar with the topography of the region and even made notes of the locations of Cherokee homes in a little sketch notebook where he mapped the river valleys through which he planned to run the railroad. The Cherokees were aware of Long's presence but did not interfere. On August 2, 1838, Rev. Daniel S. Butrick, a missionary to the Cherokees at Brainerd Mission near Ross's Landing, reported an encampment of railroad engineers at the mission. At the same time these engineers were inspecting the area, Cherokees were still camped at Ross's Landing and Brainerd Mission waiting for emigration under the management of the Ross brothers.[353]

As May 23, 1838, the deadline for the Cherokees to remove on their own accord, approached and it became clear that they would not comply with the fraudulent Treaty of New Echota, the new governor of Georgia, George Gilmer, became anxious over the state of affairs. He asked his state engineer, Colonel Long, whether he expected the Cherokees to resist removal. Long doubted that the Cherokees would resist, even though they did not want to move, but at the same time he recommended that United States troops, as opposed to state militia, be used to prevent the Cherokees from fleeing to the Creeks in Alabama or uniting with them in possible

---

[352] Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 188, 195-96.
[353] Daniel S. Butrick, *Journal of Rev. Daniel S. Butrick: May 19, 1838 – April 1, 1839* (Park Hill, Okla.: Trail of Tears Association, Oklahoma Chapter, 1998), 25; Johnston, *Western and Atlantic Railroad*, 26; Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 197-98.

armed resistance. Long suggested that state militia then be used to round up the Cherokees and escort them to emigration depots. If resistance did occur, he advised that it be met with firmness yet kindness, although he predicted that if violence did erupt, it would be very bloody. Out of desperation, he argued, the Cherokees would be "stimulated to sell their lives as dearly as possible."[354]

The use of Long's access to the Cherokee Nation to learn if the Cherokees were preparing for war was not unusual. The army had used spies against the Southeast Indians for many years. For example, during the Creek War of 1813, spies were used extensively to learn the movements and encampments of the Red Sticks. Captain David McNair, a mixed-blood Cherokee who lived near the Tennessee-Georgia state line on the Federal Road, organized thirty-six Cherokees into two companies to serve as spies against the Creeks. They received pay from the United States Army at the rate of twenty cents per day for use of their horses, the standard rate paid to other Cherokees who fought in the conflict. Gideon Morgan reported to General Andrew Jackson that he had captured three Creek spies and had begun to interrogate them concerning the location of the enemy. Morgan also reported that he was using some of Cherokee leader Pathkiller's men as spies. Gathering intelligence on the enemy was an age old practice, and because Long and the other topographical engineers had been gathering intelligence about the Indians on the frontiers for decades, it was natural for Gilmer to use his state engineer to report on the Cherokees.[355]

---

[354]Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 197-98.
[355] R. J. Meigs to Robert Brent, 10 August 1815, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 6; Robert Brent to R. J. Meigs, 6 September 1815, *Records of the Cherokee Agency*, M-208, Reel 6; Gideon Morgan to Andrew Jackson, 2 November, 1813, Library of Congress, Andrew Jackson Papers, copy on file at The Papers of Andrew Jackson Project Files.

Construction on the Western and Atlantic railroad began in Georgia in 1838 and in Tennessee in 1839; however, Long's services as chief engineer soon ended. In 1838, a new federal law ended the use of the army's topographical engineers on state and private internal improvements projects. Long was advised that he had a year to sever his ties with the state of Georgia and its railroad. Governor Gilmer and his successor, Charles J. McDonald, appealed to the Secretary of War for consideration in extending Long's services to Georgia, but to no avail. Duty demanded that Long resign as state engineer in February 1839, though he continued to reside in Georgia for several years thereafter. Because the panic of 1837 and financial problems slowed construction on the Western and Atlantic, the first train did not run from Terminus to Chattanooga until May 1851.[356]

John C. Calhoun, George W. Featherstonhaugh, Gold, Intelligence, and the Meeting in the Mountains

One of the most progressive southern leaders with regard to promoting the practical application of new scientific advances and technologies was John C. Calhoun. Although trained in the classics at Yale and in law at the Litchfield Law School, Calhoun respected the importance of the study of chemistry and engineering and took an active interest in the application of science to agriculture, internal improvements, military fortifications, and mining. He corresponded on occasion with Benjamin Silliman, professor of Chemistry and Natural History at Yale, who is often credited with the beginning of the study of geological science in the United States. Calhoun's cousin and brother-in-law John E. Colhoun went to Yale to study with Silliman in

[356] "Memorial to the Georgia Legislature," *Southern Banner*, 3 December 1836; Johnston, *Western and Atlantic Railroad,* 8-11, 27; Wood, *Stephen Harriman Long,* 197-99, 202.

1811 and, as Secretary of War in 1822, Calhoun received advice from Silliman on how to improve the United States Military Academy at West Point. Calhoun also spent time discussing science with leading researchers of the day such as Joseph Henry who wrote about an evening that he spent with Calhoun: "I was much pleased with his manners, his intelligence, and the interest he expressed in the cause of science."[357]

Calhoun was a life-long advocate of internal improvements. In 1816-17, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Calhoun promoted a system of public improvements. The following year, the House of Representatives asked Calhoun, the new Secretary of War, to draw up a plan for internal improvements to aid movement of troops and weapons in times of war. Calhoun's 1819 report recommended a broad program of improvements that were similar to those outlined by Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin in 1808. The report proposed construction of Atlantic intra-coastal canals, improvements to the navigation of inland rivers, canals, and roads to connect inland rivers with Atlantic ports. Calhoun recommended that the federal government take responsibility for road and canal projects that were truly national in scope while leaving smaller regional road and canal projects to the towns and states. One of his most visible projects was a 1,500-mile national road, which would run from Washington to New Orleans. Several routes were proposed including one that passed through Knoxville, then south through the Cherokee Nation.[358]

---

[357]Skinner and Narenda, "Rummaging Through the Attic," 355, 357-58; "Introduction," in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*: *1801-1817*, 1:xxv; W. F. DeSaussure to John C. Calhoun, 21 April 1811, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*: *1801-1817*, 1: 58-59; "Introduction," in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*: *1833-1835*, 12:xlii n78; Benjamin Silliman to John C. Calhoun, 4 July 1822, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun: 1822-1823,* 7:201.

[358] Meigs, *The Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*, 1:244-52; Hill, *Roads,* 24, 40, 160-61; Pamela L. Baker, "The Washington National Road Bill and the Struggle to Adopt a Federal System of Internal

In 1819, Calhoun wrote Speaker of the House Henry Clay recommending that a survey of the entire country be made by army engineers to determine priorities for a system of highways. Five years later, in April 1824, Congress finally enacted The Survey Bill, which authorized President Monroe to begin a survey of national road and canal projects. The execution of the survey fell under Calhoun's authority as Secretary of War. Calhoun and Monroe organized the Board of Engineers for Internal Improvements to conduct the survey. In his final report in December 1824, Calhoun recommended a system of canals and water routes connecting Lake Erie, the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers, and the Mississippi. This proposal included a canal around the Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River on lands recently ceded by the Cherokees. The Secretary of War assured congressmen from Alabama and Tennessee, including Andrew Jackson, that the survey of a canal at Muscle Shoals had high priority. Following many plan revisions, the canal was finally completed in 1836. Design problems, however, caused the canal to be abandoned soon thereafter.[359]

Calhoun served as Monroe's Secretary of War from 1817 to 1825. During this period, not only was he a great advocate of using new technology for internal improvements projects but he also shaped national policy on Indian Affairs. When Congress voted to dissolve the factory system of Indian trade in 1822, Calhoun recognized that a new system was required to protect

---

Improvement," *Journal of the Early Republic* 22 (Fall 2002), 441; Truett, *Trade and Travel*, 76-77. During the first half of the nineteenth century, several roads were referred to as "The National Road" including the proposed road from Washington to New Orleans. An earlier road which began in Cumberland, Maryland and ran west through what is now Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, was also called "The National Road." Funds for the Cumberland Road were appropriated in 1806. (Hill, *Roads,* 37, 57.)

[359] Meigs, *The Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*, 1:244-52; Hill, *Roads*, 24, 40, 54, 160-63, 171; Folmsbee, *Sectionalism*, 68; Treaty with the Cherokees, 7 January 1806, Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:90.

American control of trade with the Indians as a matter of national security. He was also concerned that weaker control of Indian affairs would cause serious setbacks in the civilization of the Indians. If the federal government could not effectively manage Indian affairs because of a lack of manpower, then Calhoun feared that the states would step in and Indian matters would devolve back to the practices of the 1790s and earlier, when there was no federal civilization program and when local and state leaders like John Sevier and William Blount of Tennessee dealt with the Cherokees using force and violence. It would also mean that each Indian nation would again have to deal with multiple state entities with different agendas. During this period, Calhoun exhibited strong federalist tendencies in regard to both Indian affairs and internal improvements. To maintain control of Indian affairs at the national level, Calhoun unilaterally decided to establish the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1824 to fill the void left by Congress's decision.[360]

It was during Monroe's administration and while Calhoun had responsibility for Indian affairs as Secretary of War that federal policy shifted significantly away from support of the civilization program and toward increased pressure for land cessions and removal. As Secretary, Calhoun authored a report which included a plan for the removal of the Indians to west of the Mississippi. In *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis*, Michael D. Green argues that Calhoun and Monroe "resurrected the old Jeffersonian concept" of Indian removal and that by the end of 1817 removal had become the focus of Monroe's presidency. Green explains that Calhoun wanted to scrap the treaty system but could not without

[360] William S. Belko, "John C. Calhoun and the Creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs: An Essay on Political Rivalry, Ideology, and Policy Making in the Early Republic," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 105 (July 2004): 170-71, 179, 186.

Congressional approval. Instead, Calhoun encouraged the use of subterfuge and fraud to obtain land cessions from Native Americans that would ultimately lead to Indian removal. It was during Calhoun's watch that a number of controversial treaties with the Southeast Indians, including the 1819 treaty with the Cherokees and the Treaties of Indian Springs in 1821 and 1825, were concluded. Calhoun was also at the helm during part of the First Seminole War. As Secretary of War, Calhoun also ordered a number of explorations of Indian territories that gathered intelligence on Indian populations and village locations, transportation routes, possible fort locations, and other natural resources. Thus, Calhoun played a significant role in both the removal of the Southeast Indians and western expansion into other indigenous lands.[361]

After he left the Department of War, Calhoun's scientific curiosity turned to agricultural practices. Like many southern planters, he was concerned with soil depletion and improving farming methods and he subscribed to the *Southern Agriculturist* which offered articles on those subjects. As discussed in Chapter 3, he became interested in mining after gold was discovered on Cherokee lands in North Georgia. Always the progressive land owner, except when it came to his labor force, he looked for scientific approaches to solving the problems inherent in mining. For example, he asked his son-in-law Thomas G. Clemson, a trained engineer, to oversee operations at his Georgia gold mine.[362]

In May 1837, Calhoun learned that the United States Geologist, George W. Featherstonhaugh, had left Washington and was on his way to the South to visit Cherokee

---

[361] John C. Calhoun to U. S. Senate, "Further Remarks on the Bill to Establish Branch Mints," *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, 12:505; Meigs, *The Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*, 1:244-52; Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, 49-50.
[362] John Ewing Bonneau to John C. Calhoun, 2 September 1831, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* 11: 465.

country. When Calhoun learned of Featherstonhaugh's trip, he invited the geologist to use Fort Hill, Calhoun's home in Pendleton, South Carolina, as his headquarters and to join him on a trip to the Georgia gold region. Featherstonhaugh had been named the United States Geologist in 1834 and reported to Colonel John James Abert of the Topographical Bureau in the War Department. Featherstonhaugh had made an earlier tour of the gold region of Virginia using James and Dolley Madison's home as a base for his excursions. A self-taught English geologist who owned a farm in New York, he had also travelled extensively through other southern states in 1834 and 1835 when he led the nation's first federal geological survey. On this southern tour he visited the gold mine region of North Carolina around Charlotte. His primary goal was usually to study mineral resources, with a secondary goal of gathering intelligence on Indian communities. In 1837, Featherstonhaugh was ordered to Cherokee country by Abert, ostensibly to again study an area's mineral resources. In reality, Featherstonhaugh's main objective this time was to perform reconnaissance for the government in preparation for possible armed resistance to removal, with the study of minerals a secondary goal.[363]

Featherstonhaugh's new assignment to visit the Cherokee Nation took him first to Ross's Landing, where he met several of the Tennessee militia officers involved in Cherokee and Creek emigration from that place. After learning from the officers of the upcoming council called by John Ross at Red Clay, the geologist called on the missionaries at Brainerd to seek transportation. Featherstonhaugh reported that Daniel Butrick and A. E. Blunt received him reluctantly, and his journal entry for his visit at Brainerd stated that "every one at the Mission

[363] John C. Calhoun to George W. Featherstonhaugh, 3 May 1837, in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun,* 13:502-503; Berkley and Berkeley, *George William Featherstonhaugh,* 114-15, 191; Featherstonhaugh, *An Excursion*, 2: 270-311, 349-59.

was zealously disposed in favour of the Indians, and anxious to prevent their being sent out of the country, a measure that would of course be followed by its suppression. Not knowing me, they considered it to be very possible that I sympathized with their oppressors; and, therefore, rather politely, but coolly enough, declined assisting me. It was evident that the people at the Mission had transferred all their natural sympathies for their own race to the persecuted Indians."[364]

Featherstonhaugh attended the Red Clay council meetings where he met federal and state military officials in charge of removal as well as John Ross. Based on what he saw in the Cherokee Nation, Featherstonhaugh decided to write directly to Secretary of War Joel Poinsett, bypassing Abert. He informed Poinsett that he did not believe that the Cherokees would voluntarily remove, and he presented their case against relocation, arguing that most of the Cherokees believed the Treaty of New Echota was illegal. His letter included the following plea: "Mr. Madison told me with much feeling, almost on his death-bed, that no one thing made him more disconsolate than the treatment the Cherokees had met with. They had so earnestly adopted the arts of the whites on the faith that it would raise them to the same civilized condition and the same rights, only to be driven from their native land, and turned into a wilderness."[365]

Featherstonhaugh brought similar issues to the attention of General Winfield Scott. He predicted that the Cherokees would make an attempt to hide in the North Carolina mountains, and he advised Scott that the best way to control the entire Cherokee country was to station

---

[364] Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage,* 2:213-215.
[365] Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage*, 2:229-245, 351; George W. Featherstonhaugh to Winfield Scott, April 4, 1838 from Washington, National Archives and Records Administration, Correspondence of the Eastern Division Pertaining to Cherokee Removal, April to December 1838, RG 393, microfilm roll no. 1475; Berkeley and Berkeley, *George William Featherstonhaugh*, 195-96.

troops at the Cherokee Agency in Calhoun, at Fort Butler near the junction of the Hiwassee and Valley Rivers, and twenty miles further upstream on the Valley River. Featherstonhaugh also provided descriptions of the missionaries and several other white men residing in Cherokee country and offered his opinion as to whether or not the federal government could trust them. It appears that the missionaries at Brainerd had been correct not to trust Featherstonhaugh. Although he was sympathetic to the case of the Cherokees, his first duty was to the army which had sent him to Cherokee country to report on what he saw there. There is no indication that General Scott acted as a direct result of Featherstonhaugh's advice, but many troops were soon thereafter stationed in the east Tennessee and North Carolina mountains and along the Valley River as Featherstonhaugh had suggested. And he was correct in his prediction that many Cherokees would hide in the mountains.[366]

After having visited the Cherokees at Red Clay and Brainerd Mission and becoming aware of how the discovery of gold on their land had precipitated the current crisis, Featherstonhaugh became anxious to visit the gold fields of North Georgia. From Red Clay, Featherstonhaugh traveled to Dahlonega and he wrote Calhoun that he hoped to visit Flint Hill on his way north. Eager to meet Featherstonhaugh, Calhoun instead rode over the mountains from Pendleton and surprised Featherstonhaugh in Dahlonega on August 11, 1837. They spent three days traveling by horseback through the gold region visiting the mines, noting the mineral formations in the valleys, and enjoying the beauty of the mountains. Featherstonhaugh recorded

---

[366] Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage*, 229-245, 351; George W. Featherstonhaugh to Winfield Scott, April 4, 1838 from Washington, National Archives and Records Administration, Correspondence of the Eastern Division Pertaining to Cherokee Removal, April to December 1838, RG 393, microfilm roll no. 1475; Berkeley and Berkeley, *George William Featherstonhaugh*, 195-96.

in his journal that he was "sorry to see the destruction which awaited all these beautiful valleys." Gold mining destroyed streams, uprooted trees, eroded soil, and ended in "a picture of perfect desolation." While this environmental catastrophe bothered the geologist, it did not seem to concern Calhoun, who expressed no regrets about the destruction in his correspondence. The senator and the geologist discussed the tariff, universal suffrage, republican government, and the gold-mining region. Featherstonhaugh enjoyed their conversation and greatly admired the senator: "His intellect is so active and comprehensive that he is able to grasp the most intricate subjects without an effort. He is also one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever knew, without any vice or vicious habit, and has at all times borne the most unsullied private character." Calhoun and Featherstonhaugh also met Georgia Governor William Schley at Dahlonega. It is not clear what they discussed, as Featherstonhaugh retired for the night and did not record the details of their conversation in his journal, though he believed he was leaving the two men behind to discuss politics.[367]

After the meeting with Governor Schley, the geologist and the senator parted ways for a few days as Featherstonhaugh continued his tour of the region and visited additional Georgia mines. He then made his way to Calhoun's home at Fort Hill, where he stayed for four nights. Featherstonhaugh then travelled to the Valley River in the Cherokee region of North Carolina which had been the scene of frenzied gold mining just a few years earlier. Although mining was still active on the river, Featherstonhaugh did not visit the new mines; instead he visited a series of abandoned mines in the area which he attributed to ancient Spanish mining. These old mines may have actually been mid-eighteenth-century works established by traders from Augusta and

[367] Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage,* 2:246-9, 254-55; Berkeley and Berkeley, *George William Featherstonhaugh*, 196.

Savannah who claimed to have purchased 30,000 acres and a silver mine from the Cherokees. The traders' claims caused a small land rush to Cherokee country; however, the purchase could not be legally verified and the mine did not produce any silver. Whatever the origins of these old works, Featherstonhaugh did not indicate that he found gold or silver at them. And his failure to visit the active mines in the Valley River area confirms that the primary objective of his trip to Cherokee country was not to record the geologic record or to scout potential mining opportunities for the federal government, but to perform reconnaissance. Leaving the Valley River area, Featherstonhaugh travelled down the Nottely River, where he witnessed three Cherokee women and a little boy looking for gold.[368]

This rendezvous of two of the brightest minds of the nineteenth century is interesting in part for what was not discussed. The meeting occurred in the middle of a great crisis in which thousands of Cherokees had been displaced from their homes in North Georgia and forced to flee into neighboring states. Many Cherokee families were totally destitute and reports of starvation circulated. The possible outbreak of war concerned the army, the government of Georgia, and many whites living in the area. Featherstonhaugh had just witnessed this firsthand; however, the subject of the Cherokee crisis apparently did not come up in the several days that he spent with Calhoun in the Cherokee region or in nearby Pendleton. These two men, who took pride in their accomplishments in science and enjoyed discussing geology and mining, conveniently put aside the uncomfortable issue of Cherokee land dispossession that freed the land for white exploration and investment in its mineral riches. Of highest importance to these men and thousands like them

[368] Brett Riggs, an archaeologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, believes that he has determined the origins of the old mines in the Valley River area. He plans to reveal their provenance in a forthcoming publication. Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage,* 283-96; Hatley, *The Dividing Paths*, 43-44.

was the exploitation of minerals on Indian lands and the application of scientific principles to mining operations.

Conclusion

The three decades leading up to the Cherokee removal of 1838 were critical developmental years for the United States in terms of science, education, and engineering. As the United States expanded west, leaders were faced with new transportation and communication problems. Military leaders were also faced with the additional burden of rapid deployment of troops and supplies to defend the expanding borders. The development of the gold industry in North Carolina and later Georgia came at a time when Americans knew very little about hydraulics or underground mining techniques or even how to locate new mineral resources. To solve these problems, American leaders looked to Europe, particularly England, for steam, canal, mining, and railroad expertise and technologies that could be applied to a variety of military and commercial problems. They recruited scientists like Troost and Featherstonhaugh to develop courses in geology in their colleges, to survey mineral resources in Indian territories, and to advise on gold mine, canal, and road building. Other Americans, like Clemson, trained in Europe and brought their scientific knowledge back to apply to the development of industry. Southern military and political leaders like Calhoun, Gaines, and Jackson used their connections with the Department of War to obtain scientific expertise from the Corps of Engineers. States petitioned for assistance from the War Department in surveying and building canals and railroads, and help in clearing waterways.

The relationship of the Corps of Engineers and the Office of Indian Affairs to the Department of War created a very powerful alliance. The Corps of Engineers was originally created to assist in the construction of fortifications, but westward expansion into frontier areas created a demand for other types of engineering expertise including road building, map making, bridge building, and natural resource reconnaissance. To aid in these frontier war needs, the Bureau of Topographers was created. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was designed to oversee disbursements of tools and payments to Indian tribes, negotiate treaties, and implement federal Indian policy. By placing all of these offices under one roof, the President and the Secretary of War could coordinate the activities of all branches of the department. When the regular Army or Bureau of Indian Affairs needed information on Indian populations or the best transportation route through indigenous lands, they could send a topographical engineer to gather intelligence while mapping rivers and trails and studying the locations of valuable minerals, thus accomplishing multiple goals at the same time. Because treaties guaranteed safe passage in their lands and the combined power of these agencies was great, the Cherokees had little recourse when state and local governments sent scientists like Long or Featherstonhaugh to conduct geological or internal improvements surveys. Agents working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs could also serve as eyes and ears for the regular Army and the administration, advise them on Indian policy, troop movements, and which lands contained valuable resources. This arm of the federal government posed an overwhelming force to be reckoned with by the Southeast Indians.

The three decades leading up to the Cherokee removal of 1838 were a critical period for the country with regard to developing scientific institutions that could address the growing pains of the young republic. By lending their expertise to state and national leaders on transportation

and mining projects, the Corps of Engineers and Topographical Bureau played an important role in conquering the southern frontier, at the expense of the indigenous peoples who lived there.

Conclusion

In the months following the Cherokee removal of 1838, former governor of North Carolina David L. Swain (1832 – 1835), his brother George Swain, their nephew D. R. Lowry, and other relatives and friends of the Swains investigated the newly ceded Cherokee lands for investment opportunities. David and D. R. focused on cattle lands in Iotla Plains near Franklin, North Carolina, while George purchased land in Van Wert in Paulding County, in the southwestern section of Cherokee Georgia. In 1838 and 1839, George wrote several letters to his brother about investment opportunities that he had identified and about the land that he had purchased. He described his land in Paulding County as having "several good springs" and said that he was "entirely pleased with [his] settlement and [a] good part of this country pleases me and for my own part I would prefer a settlement in this Cherokee country to any other part of Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Alabama." His property in Paulding County consisted of 200 acres, a newly built barn, corn and wheat fields, seven slaves, horses, hogs, cattle, sheep, and plans to build "some good decent cabins to live in." George planned on renting out part of his land for others to farm and bragged to his brother that his rich land could produce "grain of any kind, fruit, vegetables, and cotton." He urged David to move to Paulding County to be near him.[369]

[369] George Swain to D. L. Swain, 15 October 1839, The Papers of D. L. Swain, North Carolina State Archives; George Swain to D. L. Swain, 13 August 1838, The Papers of D. L. Swain, North Carolina State Archives; D. R. Lowry to D. L. Swain, 21 August 1838, The Papers of D. L. Swain; George Swain to D. L. Swain, 19 February 1839, The Papers of D. L. Swain; George Swain to D. L. Swain, 6 August 1839, The Papers of D. L. Swain.

In the same letter, George described another parcel of land that he purchased for speculation:

> Agreeable to what I told you when last I saw you I have selected a set of land in Murr[a]y County that I am pleased with. I have bought one of the most prominent lots containing one hundred and sixty acres about 120 acres of which is first qual. upland as level as you could ask for with it a settlement of 1000 acres can be made there that I think cannot be beat in Cherokee and that is hard to beat any where it lays in the bend of the Conasauga River 13 Dist and 3 section about 15 miles above where the rail road crosses the river and it is thought that the river will be navigable to that place and six miles from where it is thought there will be a deposit on the railroad. I am to pay for said lot $500 next Christmas and the same amt 25 of dec. thereafter I think I can buy 6 lots of one hundred and sixty acres each for about 6000$ that will in five years command twice that sum and that will make a desirable settlement for any body that could be satisfied with a good set of land where this is situated —— I wish you could come and see before I buy any more.[370]

In September 1840, George visited the marble quarry belonging to the brothers' uncle Jesse Lane. The quarry was located in Walker County, Georgia on recently ceded Cherokee lands fifteen miles from Ross's Landing. Lane sent samples of his variegated marble to both Philadelphia and Augusta, Georgia for evaluation. Although the marble did not have as much luster as some commercial marble, the quality of the marble was sufficient to warrant purchasing

[370] George Swain to D. L. Swain, 15 October 1839, The Papers of D. L. Swain, North Carolina State Archives.

500 saws for $600 to $800. Critical to the potential success of the new venture was the quarry's proximity to both the Tennessee River and the fact that it was only fifteen miles from the railroad.[371]

These snapshots of a family looking for opportunities to exploit the newly ceded Cherokee lands reveal two key points: first, different people were interested in different types of resources, ranging from a marble quarry to pasture land for cattle to good agricultural land; and second, access to transportation routes was very important. Although the Swains were a prominent family from North Carolina, in many respects their desires to take advantage of the newly ceded lands are representative of other southern families. George's first priority was to find a piece of agricultural land on which he could support his family. But he and other family members sought other types of economic opportunities to exploit the natural resources found in the former Cherokee Nation. In the months immediately following the 1838 removal, thousands of southerners flooded into Cherokee country looking for different kinds of opportunities. While many of these new immigrants settled for small subsistence farms where they could grow enough corn, fruit, and hogs to feed their families, others took possession of existing taverns, ferries, mills, and mines. Still others were interested in land purely for speculation. Regardless of the natural or man-made resources found on the land, property located near transportation routes sold quickest and for the highest price.

White southern plans for development of the natural resources in the Cherokee Nation did not always pan out, especially with regard to mineral resources. For example, the saltpeter

[371] George Swain to D. L. Swain, 7 September 1840, The Papers of D. L. Swain, North Carolina State Archives.

industry waxed and waned depending on the nation's war status. Because the Confederacy needed sources of local gunpowder, the advent of the Civil War necessitated the reopening of many saltpeter caves that had been closed since the end of the War of 1812. Georgia gold production reached its peak only five years after the removal and declined steadily until the Civil War, when the few remaining operations became dormant for several years. Meanwhile, other mining industries, such as marble and copper, which had not been sources of tension between the Cherokees and whites before the removal, gained solid footholds in former Cherokee lands. In 1840, as Jesse Lane was trying to establish his marble quarry in Walker County, Fritz T. Simmons was building a small-scale quarrying operation in present-day Pickens County near Tate. About 1842, Simmons installed a sawmill for cutting stone at Marble Hill and soon after established another sawmill near Jasper. The marble industry in Pickens County continued to expand through the 1850s, then it was abandoned during the Civil War, and rejuvenated in the 1880s.[372]

In a similar example, as gold mining at Coker Creek in Tennessee waned, the copper industry at nearby Ducktown gained ground. In 1843, copper was discovered at Ducktown, site of a former Cherokee village, but transportation problems hampered the industry's growth. The copper mine owner, James Raht, commissioned the building of the Copper Road to enable the transport of wagons from the copper mines to Cleveland, Tennessee. Completed in 1853, the

[372] S. W. McCallie, *Geological Survey of Georgia, Bulletin No. 1: A Preliminary Report on the Marbles of Georgia* (Atlanta: The Franklin Turner Company, 1907), 17-19.

road was built using labor provided by Cherokees who had escaped removal or returned to the area from the western Indian Territory.[373]

All natural resources discussed in this study were coveted by people of European descent and played some role in either land cessions or removal or both. The resources in demand varied from one period to the next depending on the settler's personal needs or the commercial market. In turn, the commercial market was influenced by regional and national events and trends including war, the opening of new markets, and advances in technology. Throughout the period of this study, however, some resources in Cherokee country remained in constant demand: land for subsistence farming, timber, and transportation routes. As discussed in the chapter on mineral resources and again in this conclusion, the demand for specific types of minerals wavered significantly. And as discussed in the first chapter, land for cotton agriculture was not in high demand after the land cession of 1819 because it was generally known that the climate and soil in most of the remaining lands in the Nation were not suitable for cotton; however, land to grow corn, wheat, beans, and fruit trees was always in demand.

The demand for control of transportation routes through Cherokee country was not only a constant, it increased with time as lands along the Gulf Coast were ceded by European powers to the United States, and as technological advances in transportation created movements that swept the nation. Southerners embraced the turnpike era of 1800 – 1830, the canal movement of 1790 - 1830, and the railroad craze which began in the late 1820s, because both the Southern Appalachian Mountains and the fall line caused significant problems in both water and overland transportation. As the population and commercial economy of these states grew, demands for

[373] Thurman Parish, *The Old Home Place: Pioneer Mountain Life in Polk County, Tennessee* (Benton, TN: Polk County Publishing, 1994), 20.

shortcuts through Cherokee lands to enable both interstate and intrastate trade and to connect inland producers to Gulf and Atlantic markets increased. New technology in the form of steamboats, canals, and railroads held great promise for solving the physical problems of river obstructions, non-connecting rivers, and steep mountains that interfered with commercial expansion, but there was still one problem of an entirely different nature: the Cherokees stood in the way.

From the earliest years of the new republic, when pioneers made their way over the Appalachian Mountains into Indian country, the Cherokees resisted all forms of encroachment. They posed a major threat to travel through their lands, they obstructed plans for internal improvements, and they demanded control over ferries, toll gates, and taverns on the commercial routes through their country. They controlled which whites were allowed to enter their lands through the use of passports and the implementation of laws. Negotiations to establish roads through their lands took years, and were generally only accomplished through the use of bribes and by splitting Cherokee leaders into factions. The problems that the states encountered in dealing with the Cherokees increased as the Cherokees strengthened their central government in the 1820s and began passing stricter land and transportation laws. The Cherokees sent a strong message to neighboring states and the federal government when they established their constitution. Their message was a declaration of sovereignty over their internal affairs, including the right to regulate transportation within their boundaries.

It is not my intention to suggest that the struggle for control of transportation routes through Cherokee country was the main cause of Cherokee removal. While it was an important contributing cause, and one that has generally been overlooked by historians, the fact remains

that the Cherokees insisted on control over all of their natural and man-made resources and stood in the way of Euro-Americans who looked toward their Nation and visualized unlimited opportunities to exploit Cherokee lands. Many white Americans reasoned that as long as those lands remained in the control of Indians, the full economic promise of the region could not be reached. Most southerners looked on the Cherokees as two-term Georgia governor George Gilmer (1829 – 1831, 1837 – 1839) did, who believed that the Cherokees were a backward race that was destined for extinction. In his 1855 autobiography, Gilmer explained his actions in ridding Georgia of the Cherokees: "They were without wealth, and were incapable of acquiring any; and that they had remained ignorant savages, notwithstanding the constant efforts to change them into better beings." Gilmer did not believe that the federal program first implemented by Washington and Knox had succeeded in making the Cherokees civilized. In fact, he believed that the Cherokees were such a primitive race, that with the exception of some of the mixed-bloods, they were incapable of the types of education and industry needed for the progress that Georgia or the rest of the South demanded. According to Gilmer, the Cherokees "had no genius for invention, and have added nothing to the stores of human knowledge or instruments. Stone axes and hickory clubs were their tools for work and weapons of war."[374]

White Americans who believed that the federal civilization program was a failure were wrong, of course. The Cherokees made great strides in adapting European modes of agriculture, religion, and settlement patterns. They built ferries, mills, and saltpeter mines and exported goods to neighboring white communities. Some Cherokee planters purchased slaves and

[374] George Gilmer, *Sketches of Some of the First Settlers of Upper Georgia* (1855, Reprint, Americus, GA: Americus Book Company, 1926), 246-48.

established cotton plantations. Of the southeastern tribes, the Cherokees most readily embraced the civilization program. This is one of the great tragedies in American history: their land improvements which included mines, turnpikes, sawmills and thousands of acres of pasture for stock, orchards, and corn fields which they had labored so hard to build to prove their worth as good neighbors to an expanding white population, were demeaned by racist Americans who, at the same time, coveted those resources. It is also a great irony: by proclaiming their advances with the hope of preventing removal, the Cherokees inadvertently made their lands more desirable to white Americans and thus increased, rather than dampened, pressures for their removal. In the end, the Cherokees, who had held out against decades of pressure to cede all of their lands and remove west, succumbed to the same fate as all other Indians east of the Mississippi. They blocked white progress and westward expansion, and as far as southerners were concerned, they had to go.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Newspapers

Cherokee Phoenix, New Echota, Georgia

Georgia Statesman, Milledgeville, Georgia

Knoxville Gazette, Knoxville, Tennessee

Miners Recorder and Spy in the West, Auraria, Georgia

National Banner and Nashville Whig, Nashville, Tennessee

Niles' Weekly Register, Baltimore, Maryland

Southern Banner, Athens, Georgia

Western Georgian, Rome, Georgia

Western Herald, Auraria, Georgia

Manuscript Collections

Atlanta History Center

Gresham-Magruder Collection of Newspapers

Georgia State Archives

Governors' Letterbooks

Library of Congress

Andrew Jackson Papers

National Archives and Records Administration

Property Valuations: 1835-39. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75.

Records of the Cherokee Agency in Tennessee, 1801-1835. M-208. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75.

North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh

Governor's Papers -- Edward Bishop Dudley (15 December 1789 -- 30 October 1855)

Papers of David L. Swain

Tennessee State Library and Archives

Governor Newton Cannon Papers

University of Georgia

Wheaton Papers

University of North Carolina, Wilson Library, Chapel Hill

Lenoir Family Papers II, #2262 (TN), 1819-1919

Lenoir Family Papers I, #426 (NC), 1763-1940, 1969-1975

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The Papers of Andrew Jackson Project Files

Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina

Cherokee Map Collection, 1580-1863

James W. Terrell Collection, 1820-1908

William Holland Thomas Collection, 1796-1956

Books, Reports, Pamphlets

1835 Cherokee Census: Monograph Two. Park Hill, OK: The Trail of Tears Association, Oklahoma Chapter, 2002.

Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia Passed at Milledgeville at an Annual Session in October, November, and December 1830. Milledgeville, GA: Camak and Ragland, Printers, 1831.

Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia Passed at Milledgeville at an Annual Session in October, November, and December 1831. Milledgeville, GA: Camak and Ragland, Printers, 1832.

Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia Passed at Milledgeville at an Annual Session in October, November, and December 1832. Milledgeville, GA: Camak and Ragland, Printers, 1833.

Acts of the State of Tennessee. Vols. 4-24. Nashville: State of Tennessee.

American State Papers: Class II, Indian Affairs. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832.

American State Papers: Class V, Military Affairs. Vol. 3. Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1860.

"Assay Offices, Gold Districts, North Carolina and Georgia, etc., To Accompany Bill H. R. No. 84, Report No. 39." 22d Congress, U. S. House of Representatives, December 22, 1831.

Bankhead, Marie Owen, ed. *Alabama Census Returns: 1820*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1967. Reprinted from the *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 6 (1944).

Bartram, William. *Travels and Other Writings: Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*. New York: The Library of America, 1996.

Black Hawk, *Black Hawk's Autobiography,* Roger L. Nichols, ed. 1833. Reprint, Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1999.

Butrick, Daniel S. *Journal of Rev. Daniel S. Butrick: May 19, 1838 – April 1, 1839*. Park Hill, OK: Trail of Tears Association, Oklahoma Chapter, 1998.

Calhoun, John C. *The Papers of John C. Calhoun.* Edited by W. Edwin Hemphill and Clyde N. Wilson. 28 vols. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1959-2003.

Carter, Clarence Edwin, ed. *The Territorial Papers of the United States.* Vol. 4*, The Territory South of the River Ohio, 1790-1796*. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1936.

Cherokee Nation. *Laws of the Cherokee Nation: Adopted by the Council at Various Periods*. Printed for the Benefit of the Nation. Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation: *Cherokee Advocate* Office, 1852.

Communication from His Excellency Governor Mitchell to Both Branches of the Legislature of Georgia, at the Commencement of the Session in November 1813. Milledgeville, GA: S & F Grantland, Printers, 1813.

Compendium of the Seventh Census: *1850*. Washington, D. C.: Beverly Tucker Senate Printer, 1854.

Compendium of the Sixth Census: 1840. Washington, D. C.: Thomas Allen, 1841.

Coxe, Tench. *A Statement of the Arts and Manufactures of the United States of America, for the Year 1810.* Philadelphia: printed by A. Cornman, 1814.

Dawson, William C. *Compilation of the Laws of the State of Georgia, Passed by the General Assembly, since the Year 1819, to the Year 1829.* Milledgeville, Grantland and Orme, 1831.

Douthat, James L., ed. *Hamilton County, Tennessee 1836 Tennessee Civil Districts and Tax Lists.* Signal Mountain, Tenn.: Mountain Press, 1993.

Eighth Census, 1860, Manuscript Returns of Productions of Agricultural, Hardeman County, Tennessee, District 5.

Featherstonhaugh, George W. *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor*. Vol. 2. 1847. Reprint, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1970.

———. *Excursion through the Slave States*. Vol. 2. London: John Murray, 1844.

Fremont, John Charles. *Memoirs of My Life*. Vol. 1. Chicago and New York: Belford, Clarke, & Company, 1887.

Gaines, Edmund Pendleton. *Memorial of Edmund Pendleton Gaines to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled*. Memphis, TN: Enquirer Office, 1840.

Gallatin, Albert. *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the Subject of Public Roads and Canals*. 1808. Reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Pub., 1968.

Gilmer, George. *Sketches of Some of the First Settlers of Upper Georgia*. Americus, GA: Americus Book Company, 1926.

Hawkins, Benjamin. *Letters, Journals, and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins*. Edited by C. L. Grant. Vol. 2. Savannah, GA: The Beehive Press, 1980.

Hayne, Robert Y. *Address in Behalf of the Knoxville Convention, to the Citizens of the Several States Interested in the Proposed Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad.* Charleston, SC: A. E. Miller, 1836.

Hoskins, Shirley Coats, ed. *Cherokee Property Valuations in Tennessee: 1836*. N.p.: Shirley Coats Hoskins, 1984.

Jackson, Andrew. *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson.* Edited by John Spencer Bassett. 7 vols. 1926-1935. Reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969.

Jackson, Andrew. *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*. Edited by Harold D. Moser, et al. 8 vols. to date. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980-.

James, Edwin, compiler. *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains*. 2 vols. 1823. Reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1966.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States.

Kappler, Charles J., ed. *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*. 7 Vols. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903-.

Laws of North Carolina, *1819*. Raleigh: Thomas Henderson, 1820.

Laws of North Carolina, *1824*. Raleigh: Thomas Henderson, 1825.

Laws of North Carolina, 1838-39. Raleigh: J. Gales & Son, 1839.

Long, Stephen H. *Railroad Manual, or a Brief Exposition of Principles and Deductions Applicable in Tracing the Route of a Rail Road.* 2 Vols. Baltimore: Wm. Wooddy, Printer, 1828, 1829.

———. *Surveys of the Tennessee River.* Doc. No. 167, 29th Congress, 1st Session. 1831. Reprint, Signal Mountain, TN: Institute of Historic Research, 1993.

Lumpkin, Wilson. *The Removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1907.

Mangum, Willie Person. *The Papers of Willie Person Mangum*. Raleigh: State Dept. of Archives and History, 1952.

McClinton, Rowena, ed. *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees*. 2 vols. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Mooney, James. *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. 1900. Reprint, Asheville, N. C.: Historical Images, 1992.

Murphey, Archibald D. and Wm. Henry Hoyt, eds. *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*. Raleigh, NC: E.Z. Uzzell & Co., 1914, 2 vols.

The Payne-Butrick Papers, Volumes 1, 2, 3. Edited by William L. Anderson, Jane L. Brown, and Anne F. Rogers. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.

The Payne-Butrick Papers, Volumes 4, 5, 6. Edited by William L. Anderson, Jane L. Brown, and Anne F. Rogers. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.

Perdue, Theda and Michael D. Green, eds. *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Phillips, Joyce B. and Paul Gary Phillips, eds. *The Brainerd Journal: A Mission to the Cherokees, 1817-1823*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Potter, Dorothy Williams, ed. *Passports of Southeastern Pioneers: 1770-1823*. Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1982.

Public Acts Passed at the Stated Session of the Nineteenth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1831. Nashville: Allen A. Hall and F. S. Heiskell, 1832.

Public Acts Passed at the First Session of the Twentieth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1833. Nashville: Allen A. Hall and F. S. Heiskell, 1833.

Public Acts Passed at the Called Session of the Twenty-first General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1836. Nashville: S. Nye and Company, 1836.

Report of the Committee on Internal Improvements in the Senate of Tennessee. Nashville: Hunt, Tardiff & Co. Printers, 1832.

Report of the South Carolina Commissioners to the Knoxville Convention, on the Subject of the Proposed Railroad from Charleston to Cincinnati and Louisville. Knoxville, TN: Ramsey & Craighead, 1836.

Ross, John. *The Papers of Chief John Ross*. Edited by Gary E. Moulton. 2 vols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985.

Rozema, Vicki, ed. *Voices from the Trail of Tears*. Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, Publisher, 2003.

Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, An Appendix. Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong Public Printer, 1853.

Timberlake, Henry. *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-1765*. Edited by Duane H. King. Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian Press, distributed by the University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Troost, Gerard. *Fourth Geological Report to the Twenty-second General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, made October, 1837*. Nashville, TN: S. Nye and Co., 1837.

———. *Third Geological Report to the Twenty-first General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, made October, 1835*. Nashville, TN: S. Nye and Co., 1835.

White, Robert. H., ed. *Messages of the Governors of Tennessee*. Vol. 1. Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1952-54.

Williams, Samuel Cole. *Early Travels in The Tennessee Country: 1540-1800*. 1928. Reprint, Nashville: Franklin Book Reprints, 1970.

Articles

Covington, James W., ed. "Letters from the Georgia Gold Regions." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34 (Dec. 1955): 401-409.

"The Gold Mines of North Carolina." *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review* 11 (July 1844): 62-65.

Hammond, J. H. "Governor Hammond's Report." In *Culture of Cotton: Its Natural History, Chemical Analysis, Trade, and Consumption, and Embracing a History of Cotton and the Cotton Gin*, edited by J. A. Turner, 21-23. New York: Orange Judd, Publisher, 1865.

———. “Report of the Committee of the Barnwell Agricultural Society, on the Culture of Cotton.” In *Culture of Cotton: Its Natural History, Chemical Analysis, Trade, and Consumption, and Embracing a History of Cotton and the Cotton Gin*, edited by J. A. Turner, 23-28. New York: Orange Judd, Publisher, 1865.

McPherson, Elizabeth Gregory. “Unpublished Letters of North Carolinians to Andrew Jackson.” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 14: 361-392.

Olmstead, Denison. “Report on the Geology of North Carolina, Conducted under the Direction of the Board of Agriculture,” Part 1 (November 1824) and Part 2 (November 1825). In a bound volume titled *North Carolina Miscellanie*. N.p.: [Gales and Seaton], n.d.

Peck, Jacob. “Geological and Mineralogical Account of the Mining Districts in the State of Georgia — Western Part of North Carolina and of East Tennessee, with a Map.” *The American Journal of Science and Arts* 23 (January 1833): 1-10.

Maps

Hunter, George. Untitled map of trade paths from Charleston into Cherokee country. 1751. Map 34, MSS 85-14. Cherokee Maps Collection, Western Carolina University.

Map of the Country Belonging to the Cherokee and Creek Indians. 1815. Located at the University of Georgia. Available online at http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1815m4.jpg. Accessed 11 January 2012.

Stuart, John. *A Map of Cherokee Country.* 1761. Map 41, MSS 85-14. Cherokee Maps Collection, Western Carolina University.

Secondary Sources

Books and Pamphlets

Allen, W. C. *The Annals of Haywood County, North Carolina: Historical Sociological, Biographical, and Genealogical.* 1935. Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1977.

Armstrong, Zella. *Notable Southern Families*. Vol. 1. 1918. Reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1974.

Arthur, John Preston. *Western North Carolina: A History, from 1730 to 1913*. Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1914. Published by the Edward Buncombe Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution of Asheville, NC.

Berkley, Edmund and Dorothy Smith Berkeley. *George William Featherstonhaugh: The First U. S. Government Geologist.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988.

Bonner, James C. *A History of Georgia Agriculture: 1732-1860.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964.

Braund, Kathryn E. Holland. *Deerskins & Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Brown, Meredith Mason. *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2008.

Burns, Inez. *History of Blount County Tennessee: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955.* Maryville, TN: Mary Blount Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution and the Tennessee Historical Commission, 1957.

Cavendar, Anthony. *Folk Medicine in Southern Appalachia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Coulter, E. Merton. *Auraria: The Story of a Georgia Gold-Mining Town.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1956.

Corgan, James X. *Geology in Antebellum Tennessee*. Bulletin 85. Nashville: State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Geology, 2002.

Crane, Verner. *Southern Frontier, 1670-1732*. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1928.

Crellin, John K. and Jane Philpott. *A Reference Guided to Medicinal Plants: Herbal Medicine Past and Present.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press: 1990.

Daniels, George H. *American Science in the Age of Jackson*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

Defebaugh, James Elliott. *History of the Lumber Industry of America*. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Chicago: The American Lumberman, 1906.

Dodd, William E. *The Cotton Kingdom: A Chronicle of the Old South*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920.

Dunn, Durwood. *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988.

Fenneman, Nevin M. *Physiography of Eastern United States*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938.

Finger, John R. *The Eastern Band of Cherokees: 1819-1900*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

———. *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Fogel, Robert William. *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.

Folmsbee, Stanley John. *Sectionalism and Internal Improvements in Tennessee, 1796-1845*. Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1939.

Funk, Linda. *Reed Gold Mine Guidebook*. Raleigh: Historic Sites, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1979.

Gallay, Allan. *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.

Gilbert, William Harlen, Jr. *The Eastern Cherokees*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943. Reprinted from *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 133: 169-413.

Godbold, E. Stanly, Jr. and Mattie U. Russell. *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

Goetzmann, William H. *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.

Goodwin, Gary C. *Cherokees in Transition: A Study of Changing Culture and Environment Prior to 1775.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1977.

Govan, Gilbert and James Livingood. *The Chattanooga Country, 1540-1976*. 3^{d} ed. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977.

Green, Michael D. *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982.

Harmon, Nolan B. *The Famous Case of Myra Clark Gaines*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946.

Hatley, Tom. *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Hill, Forest G. *Roads, Rails & Waterways: The Army Engineers and Early Transportation*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957.

Holmes, Alester G. and George R. Sherrill. *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work.* Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, Incorporated, 1937.

Horsman, Reginald. *Expansion and American Indian Policy*: *1738-1812.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.

Hudson, Angela Pulley. *Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Hudson, Charles. *The Southeastern Indians*. 3d ed. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

Hunter, Louis C. *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Hurt, R. Douglas. *Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987.

Inscoe, John C. *Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina.* Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

James, Marquis. *The Life of Andrew Jackson*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938.

Johannsen, Kristin. *Ginseng Dreams: The Secret World of America's Most Valuable Plant.* Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006.

Johnston, James Houston. *Western and Atlantic Railroad of the State of Georgia*. Atlanta: State of Georgia, 1931.

Keel, Bennie C. *Cherokee Archaeology: A Study of the Appalachian Summit*. 1976. Reprint, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

Kelly, Jack. *Gunpowder, Alchemy, Bombards, and Pyrotechnics: The History of the Explosive That Changed the World*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

Knapp, Richard F. *Golden Promise in the Piedmont: The Story of John Reed's Mine*. Raleigh: Historic Sites, Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1999.

Kohn, David, ed. *Internal Improvements in South Carolina: 1817-1828*. Washington, DC: private printing, 1938.

Kurlansky, Mark. *Salt: A World History*. New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

Malone, Henry Thompson. *Cherokees of the Old South: A People in Transition*, Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1956.

McCallie, S. W. *Geological Survey of Georgia, Bulletin No. 1: A Preliminary Report on the Marbles of Georgia*. Atlanta: The Franklin Turner Company, 1907.

McKenzie, Robert Tracy. *One South or Many? Plantation Belt and Upcountry in Civil War-Era Tennessee*. Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

McLoughlin, William G. *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.

———. *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839*. 1985. Reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.

Meigs, William M. *The Life of John Caldwell Calhoun*. 2 vols. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970.

Miles, Tiya. *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Moore, John Hebron. *Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.

Moss, Bobby Gilmer. *The Old Iron District: A Study of the Development of Cherokee County — 1750-1897*. Clinton, SC, Jacobs Press, 1972.

Moulton, Gary E. *John Ross: Cherokee Chief*. Athens: The University of Georgia Pres, 1978.

Nave, Robert T. *A History of the Iron Industry in Carter County to 1860*. 1953. Johnson City, TN: s.n., 1998.

Nitze, Henry B. C. and H. A. J. Wilkens. *Gold Mining in North Carolina and Adjacent South Appalachian Regions: Bulletin No. 10*. Raleigh, NC: Guy V. Barnes, Public Printer, 1897.

Nichols, Roger L. and Patrick L. Halley. *Stephen Long and American Frontier Exploration.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.

Parish, Thurman. *The Old Home Place: Pioneer Mountain Life in Polk County, Tennessee*. Benton, TN: Polk County Publishing, 1994.

Perdue, Theda. *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.

———. *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society: 1540-1866*. 1979. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, first paper printing, 1987.

Perdue, Theda and Michael D. Green. *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*. New York: Viking, 2007.

Phillips, Ulrich B. *History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1908.

Pickett, Albert J. *History of Alabama*. 1851. Reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Publishers, 1975.

Pierce, Daniel S. *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000.

Peterson, Merrill D. *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Prucha, Francis Paul. *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953.

Ramsey, J. G. M. *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. 1853. Reprint, Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1999.

Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822-1832*. Vol. 2. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.

———. *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*. New York: Viking, 2001.

Rice, Otis K. *The Allegheny Frontier: West Virginia Beginnings, 1730-1830*. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1970.

Schmidt, Ronald G. and William S. Hooks. *Whistle Over the Mountain: Timber, Track, and Trails in the Tennessee Smokies.* Yellow Springs, OH: Graphicom Press, Inc., 1994.

Silver, James W. *Edmund Pendleton Gaines: Frontier General*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949.

Skeen, C. Edward. *John Armstrong, Jr., 1758-1843: A Biography.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1981.

Smith, Marion O., ed. *The 1812-13 Quest to Mine saltpeter at Elk River Cave, Alabama: The Documentary Record*. Pamphlet, n.p., 1999.

———. *Saltpeter Mining in East Tennessee.* Maryville, TN: Byron's Graphic Arts, 1990.

Smith, Samuel D., ed. *An Archaeological and Historical Assessment of the First Hermitage*. Nashville: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Department of Conservation and the Ladies Hermitage Association, 1976.

Southerland, Henry deLeon and Jerry E. Brown. *The Federal Road through Georgia, the Creek Nation, and Alabama, 1806-1836*. Tuscaloosa & London: University of Alabama Press, 1989.

Stealey, John E. *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt Business and Western Markets*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1993.

Truett, Randle Bond. *Trade and Travel Around the Southern Appalachians Before 1830*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935.

United States Congress. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress: 1774-1989*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989.

Wallace, Anthony F. C. *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians*. New York: Hill and Wang, a Division of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1993.

Wilkins, Thurman. *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People*. 2d ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

Williams, David. *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-Niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever*. Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina, 1993.

Wilson, Charles W., Jr. *State Geological Surveys and State Geologists of Tennessee: A History of the development of the Division of Geology, Department of Conservation*. Bulletin 81. Nashville: Tennessee Division of Geology, 1981.

Wolf, Eric R. *Europe and the People Without History*. 2d ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Wood, Richard G. *Stephen Harriman Long: Army Engineer, Explorer, Inventor.* Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1966.

Woodward, Grace Steele. *The Cherokees*. 1963. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, Tenth printing, 1988.

Wright, Gavin. *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978.

Yeates, W. S. *A Preliminary Report on a Part of the Gold Deposits of Georgia*. Geological Survey of Georgia, 1896.

Articles

Aldrich, Michele L. and Alan E. Leviton. "William Barton Rogers and the Virginia Geological Survey: 1835-1842." In *The Geological Sciences in the Antebellum South*. Edited by James X. Corgan. 83-104. University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982.

Anderson, William L. "Cherokee Clay, from Duche to Wedgwood: The Journal of Thomas Griffiths, 1767-1768." *North Carolina Historical Review* 63 (Oct. 1986): 477-510.

———. "Introduction." In *Cherokee Removal: Before and After*. Edited by William L. Anderson. vii-xv. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

Baker, Pamela L. "The Washington National Road Bill and the Struggle to Adopt a Federal System of Internal Improvement." *Journal of the Early Republic* 22 (Fall 2002): 437-64.

Belko, William S. "John C. Calhoun and the Creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs: An Essay on Political Rivalry, Ideology, and Policymaking in the Early Republic." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 105 (July 2004): 170-197.

Christianson, James R. "Removal: A Foundation for the Formation of Federal Indian Policy." *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 10 (Fall 1985): 215-25.

Clark, T. D. "The Building of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad." *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 8 (January 1936): 9-25.

Corgan, James X. "Early American Geological Surveys and Gerard Troost's Field Assistants." In *The Geological Sciences in the Antebellum South*. Edited by James X. Corgan. 39-72. University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982.

Folmsbee, S. J. "The Beginnings of the Railroad Movement in East Tennessee." *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 5 (January 1933): 81-104.

———. “The Origins of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad.” *East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications* 6 (1934): 81-95.

Green, Fletcher Melvin. “Gold Mining: A Forgotten Industry of Ante-bellum North Carolina.” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 14 (January and April 1937): 1-19, 135–155.

Holland, James W. “The East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad, 1836-1860.” *East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications* 3 (January 1931): 89-107.

Kemmerer, Donald L. “The Pre-Civil War South’s Leading Crop, Corn.” *Agricultural History* 23 (October 1949): 236-39.

Millbrooke, Anne. “South Carolina State Geological Surveys of the Nineteenth Century.” In *The Geological Sciences in the Antebellum South*. Edited by James X. Corgan. 26-38. University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982.

Myer, William E. "Indian Trails of the Southeast." *Forty-second Annual Report of American Ethnology, 1924—*25. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1928.

Oakeshott, Gordon B. “Contributions of the State Geological Surveys: California as a Case History.” In *Geologists and Ideas: A History of North American Geology*, edited by Ellen T. Drake. and William M. Jordan, 323-35. Boulder, CO: The Geological Society of America, 1985.

Phillips, Paul J. “Never a Safe Road: Postal Communications in the Southwest Territory.” *Journal of East Tennessee History* 62 (1990): 18-32.

Pillsbury, Richard. “The Europeanization of the Cherokee Settlement Landscape Prior to Removal: A Georgia Case Study.” In *Geoscience and Man: Historical Archaeology of*

the Eastern United States: Papers from the R. J. Russell Symposium 23 (1983): 59-79. Edited by Robert W. Neuman.

Schroedl, Gerald. "Cherokee Ethnohistory and Archaeology from 1540 to 1838." In *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Bonnie G. McEwan, 204-41. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Silver, James W. "Edmund Pendleton Gaines: Railroad Propagandist." *The East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 9 (1937): 3-18.

Skinner, Brian J. and Barbara L. Narendra. "Rummaging through the Attic; Or, A Brief History of the Geological Sciences at Yale." In *Geologists and Ideas: A History of North American Geology*, edited by Ellen T. Drake and William M. Jordan, 355-76. Boulder, CO: The Geological Society of America, 1985.

Watson, Alan D. "Battling "Old Rip": Internal Improvements and the Role of State Government in Antebellum North Carolina." *North Carolina Historical Review* 77 (April 2000): 179-204.

Watson, Patty Jo. "Preface." In *Archaeology of the Mammoth Cave Area, e*dited by Patty Jo Watson, xv-xviii. New York: Academic Press, 1974.

———. "Recent History of Salts Cave." In *Archaeology of the Mammoth Cave Area, e*dited by Patty Jo Watson, 21-29. New York: Academic Press, 1974.

Yochelson, Ellis L. "The Role and Development of the Smithsonian Institution in the American Geological Community." In *Geologists and Ideas: A History of North American Geology*, edited by Ellen T. Drake and William M. Jordan, 337-54. Boulder, CO: The Geological Society of America, 1985.

Young, Mary. "The Exercise of Sovereignty in Cherokee Georgia." *Journal of the Early Republic* 10 (Spring 1990): 43-63.

Young, Otis E. "The Southern Gold Rush." The *Journal of Southern History* 48 (August 1982): 373-392.

Archaeological Reports

Brett Riggs and Lance Greene. *The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina: An Inventory of Trail Resources in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon, and Swain Counties*. Revised report submitted to the National Park Service, Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Research Laboratories of Archaeology and the Trail of Tears Association, North Carolina Chapter, 2006.

Smith, Samuel D., ed. *Fort Southwest Point Archaeological Site, Kingston, Tennessee: A Multidisciplinary Interpretation*. Nashville: Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, 1993.

Theses and Dissertations

Riggs, Brett H. "Removal Period Cherokee Households in Southwestern North Carolina: Material Perspectives on Ethnicity and Cultural Differentiation." 2 vols. Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1999.

Wilms, Douglas C. "Cherokee Indian Land Use in Georgia, 1800-1838." Ph. D. dissertation, 1974, University of Georgia. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1986.

Map

Tennessee (Detail). In "Indian Land Cessions in the United States." Compiled by Charles C. Royce. PL. CLXII. *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1896-1897*. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1899.

Vita

Vicki Rozema graduated magna cum laude from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 1975 with a B. S. in Secondary Education/Mathematics. After a career as a computer analyst working for major corporations, she returned to school and received an M. A. (2007) and Ph.D. (2012) in History from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Rozema is the author of three books on Cherokee history: *Footsteps of the Cherokees: A Guide to the Eastern Homelands of the Cherokee Nation*, 2d ed. (John F. Blair, Winston-Salem, N.C., 2007); *Cherokee Voices: Early Accounts of Cherokee Life in the East* (John F. Blair, Winston-Salem, N.C., 2002); and *Voices from the Trail of Tears* (John F. Blair, Winston-Salem, N.C., 2003). The first edition of *Footsteps of the Cherokees* (1995) received an award of merit from the Tennessee Historical Commission. In 2007, Rozema received a Tennessee Native American Eagle Award for her contributions to research and writing on Cherokee history. Her articles and photography documenting the history and culture of the Southern Appalachians have appeared in *Blue Ridge Country, Country, Farm and Ranch, Reminisce, and National Parks* magazines. In 1998, Rozema was named "Best Mountain Writer," gold award, by readers of *Blue Ridge Country* magazine. Rozema is also the recipient of the following awards for her research on the Cherokee-American frontier: the 2011-12 Wilson Fellowship for Military History from the Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee; the 2010-11 William B. Anderson Fellowship for Military History from the Center for the Study of War and Society, University of Tennessee; and the 2010-11 Wheeler Graduate Research Award in American History, University of Tennessee.